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James Boswell

From a Sketch by Sir Thomas Lawrence, P.R.A.

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THE LIFE

OF

SAMUEL JOHNSON, LL. D.

INCLUDING

A JOURNAL OF A TOUR TO THE HEBRIDES.

BY

JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

23109

A NEW EDITION.

WITH

NUMEROUS ADDITIONS AND NOTES,

BY

JOHN WILSON CROKER, LL.D. F.R.S.

——— Quò fit ut OMNIS
Votivâ pateat veluti descripta tabellâ
VITA SENIS—— HORAT. 1 Sat. lib. ii.

IN FIVE VOLUMES.

VOL. IV.

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ADDITIONS AND CORRECTIONS IN VOL. IV.

Page 31,—line 23, . . *for* Sept 12th, *read*—21st.
— 31, note,—l. 10, . *for* it seems, *read*—he seems.
— 47, note 1, . . . *dele* that note, and *substitute*—It appears from part of the original journal in Mr. Anderdon's papers, that the friend who told the story was Mr. Beauclerk, and the gentleman and lady alluded to were Mr. (probably Henry) and Miss Harvey. There is reason to fear that Mr. Boswell's indiscretion in betraying Mr. Beauclerk's name a little impaired the cordiality between him and Dr. Johnson.
— 49,—line 37, . . *between* idea *and* unconstitutional, *insert*—as.
— 64,—line 11, . . *fill up the blank with*—Beauclerk.
— 213,—line 1, . . *on* four peers, *add note*—[The occasion was Mr. Horne's writ of error in 1778.—ED.]
— 229, ... *dele* note 2.
— 246, ... *for* White, *read*—Whyte.
— 255, note 1, . . . *add*—Though the editor was assured, from what he thought good authority, that Mr. Damer was here alluded to, he has since reason to suppose that another and more respectable name was meant, which, however, without more certainty, he does not venture to mention.
— 263, note 2,—line 2, *for* vol. ii. *read*—vol. iii.
— 294,—line 7, . . The reference to note 2 should be on the word *bishop*, in the next line.
— 311, note 1, . . . *for* 301, *read*—304.
— 361, note, . . . *for* his, *read*—this.
— 363, note 1, . . . *add*—Johnson himself, in a memorandum among Mr. Anderdon's papers, dated in 1784, writes "*cubic* feet."
— 427, note 1,—l. 14, *for* April, 1779, *read*—1st August, 1780, p. 320.
— 451, margin, . . *after* Reyn. Recol. *dele*—p. 81.
— 459, margin, . . *dele* Apoph.
— 112, n., 415, n. 1, l. 31 *add*—BOSWELL.

THE

LIFE

OF

SAMUEL JOHNSON, LL. D.

THURSDAY, Sept. 18. Last night Dr. Johnson had proposed that the crystal lustre, or chandelier, in Dr. Taylor's large room, should be lighted up some time or other. Taylor said it should be lighted up next night. "That will do very well," said I, "for it is Dr. Johnson's birthday." When we were in the Isle of Sky, Johnson had desired me not to mention his birthday. He did not seem pleased at this time that I mentioned it, and said (somewhat sternly), "he would *not* have the lustre lighted the next day."

Some ladies, who had been present yesterday when I mentioned his birthday, came to dinner to-day, and plagued him unintentionally by wishing him joy. I know not why he disliked having his birthday mentioned, unless it were that it reminded him of his approaching nearer to death, of which he had a constant dread.

[His letter of this date to Mrs. Thrale confirms this conjecture. ED.

["TO MRS. THRALE. Letters, vol. i. p. 370.

"Ashbourne, 18th Sept. 1777.

"Here is another birthday. They come very fast. I am now sixty-eight. To lament the past is vain; what remains is to look for hope in futurity.

Letters, vol. i. p. 370.

"Boswell is with us in good humour, and plays his part with his usual vivacity. We are to go in the doctor's vehicle and dine at Derby to-morrow.

"Do you know any thing of Bolt-court? Invite Mr. Levett to dinner, and make inquiry what family he has, and how they proceed. I had a letter lately from Mrs. Williams; Dr. Lewis visits her, and has added ipecacuanha to her bark: but I do not hear much of her amendment. Age is a very stubborn disease. Yet Levett sleeps sound every night. I am sorry for poor Seward's pain, but he may live to be better.

"Mr. [Middleton's[1]] erection of an urn looks like an intention to bury me alive: I would as willingly see my friend, however benevolent and hospitable, quietly inurned. Let him think for the present of some more acceptable memorial."]

I mentioned to him a friend of mine who was formerly gloomy from low spirits, and much distressed by the fear of death, but was now uniformly placid, and contemplated his dissolution without any perturbation. "Sir," said Johnson, "this is only a disordered imagination taking a different turn."

We talked of a collection being made of all the English poets who had published a volume of poems. Johnson told me, "that a Mr. Coxeter[2], whom he knew, had gone the greatest length towards this; having collected, I think, about five hundred volumes of poets whose works were little known; but that upon his death Tom Osborne bought them, and they were dispersed, which he thought a pity, as it was curious to see any series complete; and in every volume of poems something good may be found."

He observed, that a gentleman of eminence in literature had got into a bad style of poetry of late. "He puts," said he, "a very common thing in a strange dress, till he does not know it himself, and thinks other people do not know it." BOSWELL. "That is owing to his being so much versant in old English

[1] [See *ante*, vol. iii. p. 153.—ED.]
[2] [See *ante*, vol. i. p. 514.—ED.]

poetry." JOHNSON. "What is that to the purpose, sir? If I say a man is drunk, and you tell me it is owing to his taking much drink, the matter is not mended. No, sir, ——— [1] has taken to an odd mode. For example, he'd write thus:

'Hermit hoar, in solemn cell,
Wearing out life's evening gray.'

Gray evening is common enough; but *evening gray* he'd think fine.—Stay;—we'll make out the stanza:

'Hermit hoar, in solemn cell,
Wearing out life's evening gray:
Smite thy bosom, sage, and tell,
What is bliss? and which the way?'"

BOSWELL. "But why smite his bosom, sir?" JOHNSON. "Why to show he was in earnest," (smiling). He at an after period added the following stanza:

"Thus I spoke; and speaking sigh'd;
—Scarce repress'd the starting tear;—
When the smiling sage replied—
—Come, my lad, and drink some beer [2]."

---

[1] [This has been generally supposed to have been Dr. Percy, Bishop of Dromore; but the truth is that Thomas Warton is meant, and the parodies were intended to ridicule the style of his poems published in 1777. The first lines of two of his best known odes are marked with that kind of *inversion* which Johnson laughed at in "*hermit hoar*" and "*evening gray.*"

"Evening spreads his *mantle hoar*,"

and

"Beneath the beech whose *branches bare.*"

(*T. Warton's Works*, v. i. pp. 130, 146.)

But there is no other point of resemblance that the editor can discover.—ED.]

[2] As some of my readers may be gratified by reading the progress of this little composition, I shall insert it from my notes. "When Dr. Johnson and I were sitting *tête-à-tête* at the Mitre tavern, May 9, 1778, he said, '*Where* is bliss,' would be better. He then added a ludicrous stanza, but would not repeat it, lest I should take it down. It was somewhat as follows; the last line I am sure I remember:

'While I thus cried,
seer,
The hoary replied,
Come, my lad, and drink some beer.'

"In spring, 1779, when in better humour, he made the second stanza, as in the text. There was only one variation afterwards made on my suggestion, which was changing *hoary* in the third line to *smiling*, both to avoid a sameness with the epithet in the first line, and to describe the hermit in his pleasantry. He was then very well pleased that I should preserve it."—BOSWELL.

I cannot help thinking the first stanza very good solemn poetry, as also the first three lines of the second. Its last line is an excellent burlesque surprise on gloomy sentimental inquiries. And, perhaps, the advice is as good as can be given to a low-spirited dissatisfied being:—"Don't trouble your head with sickly thinking: take a cup, and be merry."

Piozzi, p. 49. [He had on the first appearance of Warton's poems in this year indulged himself in a similar strain of ridicule. "[Warton's] verses are come out," said Mrs. Thrale: "Yes," replied Johnson, "and this frost has struck them in again. Here are some lines I have written to ridicule them: but remember that I love the fellow dearly,—for all I laugh at him.

'Wheresoe'er I turn my view,
All is strange, yet nothing new:
Endless labour all along,
Endless labour to be wrong:
Phrase that Time has flung away;
Uncouth words in disarray,
Trick'd in antique ruff and bonnet,
Ode, and elegy, and sonnet[1].'"

When he parodied the verses of another eminent writer[2], it was done with more provocation, and with some merry malice. A serious translation of the same lines, from Euripides, may be found in Burney's History of Music. Here are the burlesque ones:

"Err shall they not, who resolute explore
Time's gloomy backward with judicious eyes;
And scanning right the practices of yore,
Shall deem our hoar progenitors unwise.

[1] [The *metre* of these lines was no doubt suggested by Warton's "Crusade" and "The Grave of King Arthur," (*Works*, v. ii. pp. 38, 51); but they are, otherwise, rather a criticism than a parody.—Ed.]

[2] [Malone's MS. notes, communicated by Mr. Markland, state that this was "Robert Potter, the translator of Æschylus and Euripides, who wrote a pamphlet against Johnson, in consequence of his criticism on Gray." It may, therefore, be presumed that these verses were made subsequently to that publication, in 1783. Potter died, a prebendary of Norwich, in 1804, æt. eighty-three.—Ed.]

Piozzi, p. 50.

" They to the dome where smoke with curling play
Announced the dinner to the regions round,
Summon'd the singer blithe, and harper gay,
And aided wine with dulcet-streaming sound.

" The better use of notes, or sweet or shrill,
By quiv'ring string, or modulated wind;
Trumpet or lyre—to their arch bosoms chill,
Admission ne'er had sought, or could not find.

" Oh! send them to the sullen mansions dun,
Her baleful eyes where Sorrow rolls around;
Where gloom-enamour'd Mischief loves to dwell,
And Murder, all blood-bolter'd, schemes the wound.

" When cates luxuriant pile the spacious dish,
And purple nectar glads the festive hour;
The guest, without a want, without a wish,
Can yield no room to Music's soothing power."

Some of the old legendary stories put in verse by modern writers[1] provoked him to caricature them thus one day at Streatham; but they are already well-known.

" The tender infant, meek and mild,
Fell down upon the stone;
The nurse took up the squealing child,
But still the child squeal'd on."

A famous ballad also, beginning *Rio verde, Rio verde,* when Mrs. Piozzi commended the translation of it[2], he said he could do it better himself—as thus:

" Glassy water, glassy water,
Down whose current, clear and strong,
Chiefs confused in mutual slaughter,
Moor and Christian roll along."

" But, sir," said she, " this is not ridiculous at all." " Why no," replied he, " why should I always write

[1] [*This* alludes to Bishop Percy and his " Hermit of Warkworth."—Ed.]

[2] [No doubt the translation by Bishop Percy:

" Gentle river, gentle river,
Lo, thy streams are stain'd with gore;
Many a brave and noble captain
Floats along thy willow'd shore."

Neither of these pretended translations give any idea of the peculiar simplicity of the original.—Ed.]

Piozzi, p. 51. ridiculously? perhaps because I made those verses to imitate [Warton][1]."

Mrs. Piozzi gives another comical instance of caricatura imitation. Some one praising these verses of Lopez de Vega,

"Se acquien los leones vence
Vence una muger hermosa,
O el de flaco averguençe
O ella di ser mas furiosa,"

more than he thought they deserved, Dr. Johnson instantly observed, "that they were founded on a trivial conceit; and that conceit ill-explained, and ill-expressed beside. The lady, we all know, does not conquer in the same manner as the lion does: 'tis a mere play of words," added he, "and you might as well say, that

'If the man who turnips cries,
Cry not when his father dies,
'Tis a proof that he had rather
Have a turnip than his father.'"

And this humour is of the same sort with which he answered the friend who commended the following line:

"Who rules o'er freemen should himself be free."

"To be sure," said Dr. Johnson,

"Who drives fat oxen should himself be fat."

This readiness of finding a parallel, or making one, was shown by him perpetually in the course of conversation. When the French verses of a certain pantomime were quoted thus,

[1] [Mrs. Piozzi had here added the verses cited by Boswell, "*Hermit hoar*," exactly as he has given them; which is remarkable, because her book appeared so long before his.—ED.]

" Je suis Cassandre descendue des cieux, Piozzi,
Pour vous faire entendre, mesdames et messieurs, p. 52.
Que je suis Cassandre descendue des cieux ;"

he cried out gaily and suddenly, almost in a moment,

" I am Cassandra come down from the sky,
To tell each by-stander what none can deny,
That I am Cassandra come down from the sky."

The pretty Italian verses too, at the end of Baretti's book, called " Easy Phraseology," he did *all' improviso*, in the same manner:

" Viva ! viva la padrona !
Tutta bella, e tutta buona,
La padrona e un angiolella
Tutta buona e tutta bella ;
Tutta bella e tutta buona ;
Viva ! viva la padrona !"

" Long may live my lovely Hetty !
Always young and always pretty,
Always pretty, always young,
Live my lovely Hetty long !
Always young and always pretty ;
Long may live my lovely Hetty [1] !"

The famous distich too, of an Italian *improvisatore*, who, when the Duke of Modena ran away from the comet in the year 1742 or 1743,

" Se al venir vestro i principi sen' vanno
Deh venga ogni di—durate un anno ;"

" which," said he, " would do just as well in our language thus:

' If at your coming princes disappear,
Comets ! come every day—and stay a year.' "

When some one in company commended the verses of M. de Benserade *à son Lit:*

" Theatre des ris et des pleurs,
Lit ! ou je nais, et ou je meurs,
Tu nous fais voir comment voisins,
Sont nos plaisirs, et nos chagrins."

[1] [The reader will recollect that Mrs. Thrale's name was *Hester*.—ED.]

To which he replied without hesitating,

"In bed we laugh, in bed we cry,
And born in bed, in bed we die;
The near approach a bed may show
Of human bliss to human woe."]

Friday, September 19, after breakfast, Dr. Johnson and I set out in Dr. Taylor's chaise to go to Derby. The day was fine, and we resolved to go by Keddlestone, the seat of Lord Scarsdale, that I might see his lordship's fine house. I was struck with the magnificence of the building; and the extensive park, with the finest verdure, covered with deer, and cattle, and sheep, delighted me. The number of old oaks, of an immense size, filled me with a sort of respectful admiration; for one of them sixty pounds was offered. The excellent smooth gravel roads; the large piece of water formed by his lordship from some small brooks, with a handsome barge upon it; the venerable Gothick church, now the family chapel, just by the house; in short, the grand group of objects agitated and distended my mind in a most agreeable manner. "One should think," said I, "that the proprietor of all this *must* be happy." "Nay, sir," said Johnson, "all this excludes but one evil—poverty [1]."

Our names were sent up, and a well-drest elderly housekeeper, a most distinct articulator, showed us the house; which I need not describe, as there is an account of it published in "Adams's Works in Archi-

[1] When I mentioned Dr. Johnson's remark to a lady of admirable good sense and quickness of understanding, she observed, "It is true all this excludes only one evil; but how much good does it let in!"—*First edition.* To this observation much praise has been justly given. Let me then now do myself the honour to mention that the lady who made it was the late Margaret Montgomerie, my very valuable wife, and the very affectionate mother of my children, who, if they inherit her good qualities, will have no reason to complain of their lot. *Dos magna parentum virtus.*—*Second edition.*—BOSWELL.

tecture." Dr. Johnson thought better of it to-day, than when he saw it before[1]; for he had lately attacked it violently, saying, "It would do excellently for a townhall. The large room with the pillars," said he, "would do for the judges to sit in at the assizes; the circular room for a jury-chamber; and the room above for prisoners." Still he thought the large room ill lighted, and of no use but for dancing in; and the bedchambers but indifferent rooms; and that the immense sum which it cost was injudiciously laid out. Dr. Taylor had put him in mind of his *appearing* pleased with the house. "But," said he, "that was when Lord Scarsdale was present. Politeness obliges us to appear pleased with a man's works when he is present. No man will be so ill-bred as to question you. You may therefore pay compliments without saying what is not true. I should say to Lord Scarsdale of his large room, 'My lord, this is the most *costly* room that I ever saw;' which is true."

Dr. Manningham, physician in London, who was visiting at Lord Scarsdale's, accompanied us through many of the rooms; and soon afterwards my lord himself, to whom Dr. Johnson was known, appeared, and did the honours of the house. We talked of Mr. Langton. Johnson, with a warm vehemence of affectionate regard, exclaimed, "The earth does not bear a worthier man than Bennet Langton." We saw a good many fine pictures, which I think are described in one of "Young's Tours." There is a printed catalogue of them, which the housekeeper put into my hand. I should like to view them at leisure. I was much struck with Daniel interpreting Nebuchadnezzar's dream, by Rembrandt. We were

[1] [See *ante*, Tour in Wales, vol. iii. p. 129.—Ed.]

shown a pretty large library. In his lordship's dressing-room lay Johnson's small dictionary: he showed it to me, with some eagerness, saying, "Look 'ye! *Quæ regio in terris nostri non plena laboris.*" He observed, also, Goldsmith's "Animated Nature;" and said, "Here's our friend! The poor doctor would have been happy to hear of this."

In our way, Johnson strongly expressed his love of driving fast in a post-chaise [1]. "If," said he, "I had no duties, and no reference to futurity, I would spend my life in driving briskly in a post-chaise with a pretty woman; but she should be one who could understand me, and would add something to the conversation." I observed, that we were this day to stop just where the Highland army did in 1745. JOHNSON. "It was a noble attempt." BOSWELL. "I wish we could have an authentick history of it." JOHNSON. "If you were not an idle dog you might write it, by collecting from every body what they can tell, and putting down your authorities." BOSWELL. "But I could not have the advantage of it in my lifetime." JOHNSON. "You might have the satisfaction of its fame, by printing it in Holland; and as to profit, consider how long it was before writing came to be considered in a pecuniary view. Baretti says he is the first man that ever received copy-money in Italy." I said that I would endeavour to do what Dr. Johnson suggested; and I thought that I might write so as to venture to publish my "History of the Civil War in Great Britain in 1745 and 1746" without being obliged to go to a foreign press [2].

[1] [See *ante*, vol. iii. p. 339, and p. 370.—ED.]

[2] I am now happy to understand that Mr. John Home, who was himself gallantly in the field for the reigning family in that interesting warfare, but is generous enough to do justice to the other side, is preparing an account of it for the press.—BOSWELL.

When we arrived at Derby, Dr. Butter accompanied us to see the manufactory of china there. I admired the ingenuity and delicate art with which a man fashioned clay into a cup, a saucer, or a tea-pot, while a boy turned round a wheel to give the mass rotundity. I thought this as excellent in its species of power, as making good verses in its species. Yet I had no respect for this potter. Neither, indeed, has a man of any extent of thinking for a mere verse-maker, in whose numbers, however perfect, there is no poetry, no mind. The china was beautiful, but Dr. Johnson justly observed it was too dear; for that he could have vessels of silver, of the same size, as cheap as what were here made of porcelain[1].

I felt a pleasure in walking about Derby, such as I always have in walking about any town to which I am not accustomed. There is an immediate sensation of novelty; and one speculates on the way in which life is passed in it, which, although there is a sameness every where upon the whole, is yet minutely diversified. The minute diversities in every thing are wonderful. Talking of shaving the other night at Dr. Taylor's, Dr. Johnson said, "Sir, of a thousand shavers, two do not shave so much alike as not to be distinguished." I thought this not possible, till he specified so many of the varieties in shaving;—holding the razor more or less perpendicular;—drawing long or short strokes;—beginning at the upper part of the face, or the under—at the right side or the left side. Indeed when one considers what variety of sounds can be uttered by the windpipe, in the compass of a very small aperture, we may be convinced how many degrees of difference there may be in the application of a razor.

[1] [The editor was once present when a flower-pot of *Sève* china, of about the size that would hold a pint of water, was sold by auction for 70*l*.—Ed.]

We dined with Dr. Butter[1], whose lady is daughter of my cousin Sir John Douglas, whose grandson is now presumptive heir of the noble family of Queensberry. Johnson and he had a good deal of medical conversation. Johnson said, he had somewhere or other given an account of Dr. Nichols's discourse "*De Animâ Medicâ.*" He told us, "that whatever a man's distemper was, Dr. Nichols would not attend[2] him as a physician, if his mind was not at ease; for he believed that no medicines would have any influence. He once attended a man in trade, upon whom he found none of the medicines he prescribed had any effect; he asked the man's wife privately whether his affairs were not in a bad way? She said no. He continued his attendance some time, still without success. At length the man's wife told him she had discovered that her husband's affairs *were* in a bad way. When Goldsmith was dying, Dr. Turton said to him, 'Your pulse is in greater disorder than it should be, from the degree of fever which you have: is your mind at ease?' Goldsmith answered it was not."

After dinner, Mrs. Butter went with me to see the silk-mill which Mr. John Lombe had[3] had a patent for, having brought away the contrivance from Italy. I am not very conversant with mechanicks; but the simplicity of this machine, and its multiplied operations, struck me with an agreeable surprise. I had learnt from Dr. Johnson, during this interview, not to think with a dejected indifference of the works of

[1] Dr. Butter was at this time a practising physician at Derby. He afterwards removed to London, where he died in his seventy-ninth year, March 22, 1805. He is authour of several medical tracts.—MALONE.

[2] [Dr. Nichols's opinion had made a strong impression on Johnson's mind, and appears to have been the cause of his urging Mrs. Aston and his other correspondents, as we have seen above, to keep her mind as much as possible at ease.—HALL.]

[3] See Hutton's "History of Derby," a book which is deservedly esteemed for its information, accuracy, and good narrative. Indeed the age in which we live is eminently distinguished by topographical excellence.—BOSWELL.

art, and the pleasures of life, because life is uncertain and short; but to consider such indifference as a failure of reason, a morbidness of mind; for happiness should be cultivated as much as we can, and the objects which are instrumental to it should be steadily considered as of importance with a reference not only to ourselves, but to multitudes in successive ages. Though it is proper to value small parts, as

"Sands make the mountain, moments make the year;"—YOUNG.

yet we must contemplate, collectively, to have a just estimation of objects. One moment's being uneasy or not, seems of no consequence; yet this may be thought of the next, and the next, and so on, till there is a large portion of misery. In the same way one must think of happiness, of learning, of friendship. We cannot tell the precise moment when friendship is formed. As in filling a vessel drop by drop, there is at last a drop which makes it run over; so in a series of kindnesses there is at last one which makes the heart run over. We must not divide the objects of our attention into minute parts, and think separately of each part. It is by contemplating a large mass of human existence, that a man, while he sets a just value on his own life, does not think of his death as annihilating all that is great and pleasing in the world, as if actually *contained in his mind*, according to Berkeley's reverie [1]. If his imagination be not sickly and feeble, it "wings its distant way" far beyond himself, and views the world in unceasing activity of every sort. It must be acknowledged, however, that Pope's plaintive reflection, that all things would be as gay as ever, on the day of his

[1] [This is by no means an accurate allusion to Berkeley's theory.—ED.]

death, is natural and common. We are apt to transfer to all around us our own gloom, without considering that at any given point of time there is, perhaps, as much youth and gaiety in the world as at another. Before I came into this life, in which I have had so many pleasant scenes, have not thousands and ten thousands of deaths and funerals happened, and have not families been in grief for their nearest relations? But have those dismal circumstances at all affected *me?* Why then should the gloomy scenes which I experience, or which I know, affect others? Let us guard against imagining that there is an end of felicity upon earth, when we ourselves grow old, or are unhappy.

Dr. Johnson told us at tea, that when some of Dr. Dodd's pious friends were trying to console him by saying that he was going to leave a "wretched world," he had honesty enough not to join in the cant:—"No, no," said he, "it has been a very agreeable world to me." Johnson added, "I respect Dodd for thus speaking the truth; for, to be sure, he had for several years enjoyed a life of great voluptuousness."

He told us that Dodd's city friends stood by him so, that a thousand pounds were ready to be given to the gaoler, if he would let him escape. He added, that he knew a friend of Dodd's, who walked about Newgate for some time on the evening before the day of his execution, with five hundred pounds in his pocket, ready to be paid to any of the turnkeys who could get him out, but it was too late; for he was watched with much circumspection. He said, Dodd's friends had an image of him made of wax, which was to have been left in his place; and he believed it was carried into the prison.

[Dr. Johnson also told Miss Reynolds that Dodd

probably entertained some hopes of life even to the last moment, having been flattered by some of his medical friends that there was a chance of suspending its total extinction till he was cut down, by placing the knot of the rope in a particular manner behind his ear. That then he was to be carried to a convenient place, where they would use their utmost endeavour to recover him. All this was done. The hangman observed their injunctions in fixing the rope, and as the cart drew off, said in Dodd's ear, you must not move an inch! But he struggled.—Being carried to the place appointed, his friends endeavoured to restore him by bathing his breast with warm water, which Dr. Johnson said was not so likely to have that effect as cold water; and on this occasion he repeated [with a slight variation] the story already told, that a man wandered round the prison some days before his execution, with bank notes in his pocket to the amount of a thousand pounds, to bribe the jailor to let him escape.] Reyn. Recol.

Johnson disapproved of Dr. Dodd's leaving the world persuaded that "The Convict's Address to his unhappy Brethren" was of his own writing. "But, sir (said I), you contributed to the deception; for when Mr. Seward expressed a doubt to you that it was not Dodd's own, because it had a great deal more force of mind in it than any thing known to be his, you answered,—'Why should you think so? Depend upon it, sir, when any man knows he is to be hanged in a fortnight, it concentrates his mind wonderfully.'" JOHNSON. "Sir, as Dodd got it from me to pass as his own, while that could do him any good, that was an *implied promise* that I should not own it. To own it, therefore, would have been telling a lie, with the addition of breach of promise, which was worse than simply telling a lie to make it

be believed it was Dodd's. Besides, sir, I did not *directly* tell a lie: I left the matter uncertain. Perhaps I thought that Seward would not believe it the less to be mine for what I said; but I would not put it in his power to say I had owned it."

He praised Blair's Sermons: "Yet," said he, (willing to let us see he was aware that fashionable fame, however deserved, is not always the most lasting,) "perhaps they may not be reprinted after seven years; at least not after Blair's death."

He said, "Goldsmith was a plant that flowered late. There appeared nothing remarkable about him when he was young; though when he had got high in fame, one of his friends[1] began to recollect something of his being distinguished at college[2]. Goldsmith in the same manner recollected more of that friend's early years, as he grew a greater man."

I mentioned that Lord Monboddo told me, he awaked every morning at four, and then for his health got up and walked in his room naked, with the window open, which he called taking *an air-bath*; after which he went to bed again, and slept two hours more. Johnson, who was always ready to beat down any thing that seemed to be exhibited with disproportionate importance, thus observed: "I suppose, sir, there is no more in it than this, he wakes at four, and cannot sleep till he chills himself, and makes the warmth of the bed a grateful sensation."

I talked of the difficulty of rising in the morning. Dr. Johnson told me, "that the learned Mrs. Carter, at that period when she was eager in study, did not awake as early as she wished, and she therefore had a contrivance, that, at a certain hour, her chamber-

[1] [Mr. Burke.—Ed.]

[2] He *was* distinguished in college, as appears from a circumstance mentioned by Dr. Kearney. See vol. i. p. 420.—Malone.

light should burn a string to which a heavy weight was suspended, which then fell with a strong sudden noise: this roused her from sleep, and then she had no difficulty in getting up." But I said *that* was my difficulty; and wished there could be some medicine invented which would make one rise without pain, which I never did, unless after lying in bed a very long time. Perhaps there may be something in the stores of Nature which could do this. I have thought of a pulley to raise me gradually; but that would give me pain, as it would counteract my internal inclination. I would have something that can dissipate the *vis inertiæ*, and give elasticity to the muscles. As I imagine that the human body may be put, by the operation of other substances, into any state in which it has ever been; and as I have experienced a state in which rising from bed was not disagreeable, but easy, nay, sometimes agreeable; I suppose that this state may be produced, if we knew by what. We can heat the body, we can cool it; we can give it tension or relaxation; and surely it is possible to bring it into a state in which rising from bed will not be a pain.

Johnson observed, that "a man should take a sufficient quantity of sleep, which Dr. Mead says is between seven and nine hours." I told him, that Dr. Cullen said to me, that a man should not take more sleep than he can take at once. JOHNSON. "This rule, sir, cannot hold in all cases; for many people have their sleep broken by sickness; and surely, Cullen would not have a man to get up, after having slept but an hour. Such a regimen would soon end in a *long sleep*[1]." Dr. Taylor remarked I think

[1] This regimen was, however, practised by Bishop Ken, of whom Hawkins (*not Sir John*) in his life of that venerable prelate, page 4, tells us, "And that neither his study might be the aggressor on his hours of instruction, or what he

very justly, that "a man who does not feel an inclination to sleep at the ordinary times, instead of being stronger than other people, must not be well; for a man in health has all the natural inclinations to eat, drink, and sleep, in a strong degree."

Johnson advised me to-night not to *refine* in the education of my children. "Life," said he, "will not bear refinement: you must do as other people do."

Hawk. Apoph. p. 204. [When he was asked by Dr. Lawrence what he thought the best system of education, he replied, "School in school-hours, and home-instruction in the intervals."]

Piozzi, p. 168, 168. [On another occasion he maintained that "A boy should never be sent to Eton or Westminster school before he is twelve years old at least; for if in his years of babyhood he fails to attain that general and transcendent knowledge without which life is perpetually put to a stand, he will never get it at a public school, where if he does not learn Latin and Greek, he learns nothing." Dr. Johnson often said, "that there was too much stress laid upon literature as indispensably necessary: there is surely no need that every body should be a scholar, no call that every one should square the circle. Our manner of teaching cramps and warps many a mind, which if left more at liberty would have been respectable in some way, though perhaps not in that." "We lop our trees, and prune them, and pinch them about," he would say, "and nail them tight up to the wall, while a

judged his duty, prevent his improvements; or both, his closet addresses to his God; he strictly accustomed himself to but one sleep, which often obliged him to rise at one or two of the clock in the morning, and sometimes sooner; and grew so habitual, that it continued with him almost till his last illness. And so lively and cheerful was his temper, that he would be very facetious and entertaining to his friends in the evening, even when it was perceived that with difficulty he kept his eyes open; and then seemed to go to rest with no other purpose than the refreshing and enabling him with more vigour and cheerfulness to sing his morning hymn, as he then used to do to his lute before he put on his clothes."—BOSWELL.

good standard is at last the only thing for bearing healthy fruit, though it commonly begins later. Let the people learn necessary knowledge: let them learn to count their fingers, and to count their money, before they are caring for the classics; for," says Dr. Johnson, "though I do not quite agree with the proverb, that *Nullum numen abest si sit prudentia,* yet we may very well say, that *Nullum numen adest—ni sit prudentia.*"

Indeed useful and what we call every-day knowledge had the most of his just praise. "Let your boy learn arithmetic, dear madam," was his advice to the mother of a rich young heir: "he will not then be a prey to every rascal which this town swarms with: teach him the value of money and how to reckon it: ignorance to a wealthy lad of one-and-twenty is only so much fat to a sick sheep: it just serves to call the *rooks* about him."]

[This young heir was the well-known Sir John Lade[1], and Dr. Johnson's sagacity had, no doubt, detected in him a disposition to that profusion for which he was afterwards so remarkable. It is curious too, that, on another important subject, Johnson should have given Sir John some early advice, which, in the sequel, he too notoriously disregarded.] ED.

[One day as he was musing over the fire of the drawing-room at Streatham, this young gentleman [who was Mr. Thrale's nephew and ward] called to him suddenly, and rather disrespectfully, in these words: Dr. Johnson, would you advise me to marry? "I would advise no man to marry, sir (replied in a Piozzi, p. 74, 75.

[1] [He was the posthumous son of the fourth baronet, by Mr. Thrale's sister. He entered eagerly into all the follies of the day; was a remarkable *whip*, and married a woman of the town. See towards the close of the fourth vol. the lively, satirical, and too prophetic verses which Johnson wrote on his coming of age.—ED.]

very angry tone Dr. Johnson), who is not likely to propagate understanding;" and so left the room. Our companion looked confounded, and seemed to have scarce recovered the consciousness of his own existence, when Johnson came back, and drawing his chair among the party, with altered looks and a softened voice, joined in the general chat, insensibly led the conversation to the subject of marriage, where he explained himself in a dissertation so useful, so elegant, so founded on the true knowledge of human life, and so adorned with beauty of sentiment, that no one ever recollected the offence, except to rejoice in its consequences.]

As we drove back to Ashbourne, Dr. Johnson recommended to me, as he had often done, to drink water only: "For," said he, "you are then sure not to get drunk; whereas, if you drink wine, you are never sure." I said, drinking wine was a pleasure which I was unwilling to give up. "Why, sir," said he, "there is no doubt that not to drink wine is a great deduction from life: but it may be necessary." He however owned, that in his opinion a free use of wine did not shorten life; and said, he would not give less for the life of a certain Scotch Lord [1] (whom he named) celebrated for hard drinking, than for that of a sober man. "But stay," said he, with his usual intelligence, and accuracy of inquiry—"does it take much wine to make him drunk?" I answered, "a great deal either of wine or strong punch."—"Then," said he, "that is the worse." I presume to illustrate my friend's observation thus; "A fortress which soon surrenders has its walls less shattered than when a long and obstinate resistance is made."

[1] [Probably Thomas, sixth Earl of Kellie, born in 1732; died in 1781. He was remarkable for some musical talents, but still more for his conviviality. Even the *Peerage* confesses "that he was more assiduous in the service of Bacchus than Apollo."—ED.]

I ventured to mention a person who was as violent a Scotchman as he was an Englishman; and literally had the same contempt for an Englishman compared with a Scotchman, that he had for a Scotchman compared with an Englishman; and that he would say of Dr. Johnson, "Damned rascal! to talk as he does of the Scotch." This seemed, for a moment, "to give him pause." It, perhaps, presented his extreme prejudice against the Scotch in a point of view somewhat new to him by the effect of *contrast.*

By the time when we returned to Ashbourne, Dr. Taylor was gone to bed. Johnson and I sat up a long time by ourselves.

He was much diverted with an article which I showed him in the "Critical Review" of this year, giving an account of a curious publication, entitled "A Spiritual Diary and Soliloquies, by John Rutty, M. D." Dr. Rutty was one of the people called quakers, a physician of some eminence in Dublin, and authour of several works. This Diary, which was kept from 1753 to 1775, the year in which he died, and was now published in two volumes octavo, exhibited, in the simplicity of his heart, a minute and honest register of the state of his mind; which, though frequently laughable enough, was not more so than the history of many men would be, if recorded with equal fairness.

The following specimens were extracted by the reviewers:

"Tenth month, 1753.

"23.—Indulgence in bed an hour too long.

"Twelfth month, 17.—An hypochondriack obnubilation from wind and indigestion.

"Ninth month, 28.—An over-dose of whiskey.

"29.—A dull, cross, cholerick day.

"First month, 1657, 22.—A little swinish at dinner and repast.

"Dogged on provocation.

"Second month, 5.—Very dogged or snappish.

"14.—Snappish on fasting.

"26.—Cursed snappishness to those under me, on a bodily indisposition.

"Third month, 11.—On a provocation, exercised a dumb resentment for two days, instead of scolding.

"22.—Scolded too vehemently.

"23.—Dogged again.

"Fourth month, 29.—Mechanically and sinfully dogged."

Johnson laughed heartily at this good Quietist's self-condemning minutes; particularly at his mentioning, with such a serious regret, occasional instances of "*swinishness* in eating, and *doggedness of temper*." He thought the observations of the Critical Reviewers upon the importance of a man to himself so ingenious and so well expressed, that I shall here introduce them.

After observing, that "there are few writers who have gained any reputation by recording their own actions," they say,

"We may reduce the egotists to four classes. In the *first* we have Julius Cæsar: he relates his own transactions; but he relates them with peculiar grace and dignity, and his narrative is supported by the greatness of his character and achievements. In the *second* class we have Marcus Antoninus: this writer has given us a series of reflections on his own life; but his sentiments are so noble, his morality so sublime, that his meditations are universally admired. In the *third* class we have some others of tolerable credit, who have given importance to their own private history by an intermixture of literary anecdotes, and the occurrences of their own times: the celebrated *Huetius*[1] has published an entertaining volume upon this plan, '*De rebus ad eum pertinentibus*.' In the *fourth* class we have the journalists, temporal and spiritual: Elias Ashmole, William Lilly, George Whitefield, John Wesley, and a thousand other old women and fanatick writers of memoirs and meditations."

I mentioned to him that Dr. Hugh Blair, in his

[1] [Huet, Bishop of Avranches.—See *ante*, v. i. p. 58.—ED.]

lectures on Rhetorick and Belles Lettres, which I heard him deliver at Edinburgh, had animadverted on the Johnsonian style as too pompous; and attempted to imitate it, by giving a sentence of Addison, in "The Spectator," No. 411, in the manner of Johnson. When treating of the utility of the pleasures of imagination in preserving us from vice, it is observed of those "who know not how to be idle and innocent," that "their very first step out of business is into vice or folly;" which Dr. Blair supposed would have been expressed in "The Rambler" thus: "their very first step out of the regions of business is into the perturbation of vice, or the vacuity of folly[1]." JOHNSON. "Sir, these are not the words I should have used. No, sir; the imitators of my style have not hit it. Miss Aikin has done it the best; for she has imitated the sentiment as well as the diction[2]."

I intend, before this work is concluded, to exhibit specimens of imitation of my friend's style in various modes; some caricaturing or mimicking it, and some formed upon it, whether intentionally, or with a degree of similarity to it, of which perhaps the writers were not conscious.

In Baretti's Review, which he published in Italy, under the title of "FRUSTA LETTERARIA," it is observed, that Dr. Robertson the historian had formed his style upon that of "*Il celebre Samuele Johnson.*" My friend himself was of that opinion; for he once said to me, in a pleasant humour, "Sir, if Robertson's

[1] When Dr. Blair published his "Lectures," he was invidiously attacked for having omitted his censure on Johnson's style, and, on the contrary, praising it highly. But before that time Johnson's "Lives of the Poets" had appeared, in which his style was considerably easier than when he wrote "The Rambler." It would, therefore, have been uncandid in Blair, even supposing his criticism to have been just, to have preserved it.—BOSWELL.

[2] [Probably in an essay "Against Inconsistency in our Expectations," by Miss Aikin, afterwards Mrs. Barbauld, in a volume of miscellaneous pieces published by her and her brother, Dr. Aikin, in 1773.—ED.]

style be faulty, he owes it to me; that is, having too many words, and those too big ones."

I read to him a letter which Lord Monboddo had written to me, containing some critical remarks upon the style of his "Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland." His lordship praised the very fine passage upon landing at Icolmkill[1]: but his own style being exceedingly dry and hard, he disapproved of the richness of Johnson's language, and of his frequent use of metaphorical expressions. JOHNSON. "Why, sir, this criticism would be just, if, in my style, superfluous words, or words too big for the thoughts, could be pointed out; but this I do not believe can be done. For instance, in the passage which Lord Monboddo admires, 'We were now treading that illustrious region,' the word *illustrious* contributes nothing to the mere narration; for the fact might be told without it: but it is not, therefore, superfluous; for it wakes the mind to peculiar attention, where something of more than usual importance is to be presented. 'Illustrious!'—for what? and then the sentence proceeds to expand the circumstances connected with Iona. And, sir, as to metaphorical expression, that is a great excellence in style, when it is used with propriety, for it gives you two ideas for one;—conveys the meaning more luminously, and generally with a perception of delight."

He told me, that he had been asked to undertake the new edition of the "Biographia Britannica," but had declined it; which he afterwards said to me he regretted. In this regret many will join, because it would have procured us more of Johnson's most delightful species of writing; and although my friend

[1] See *ante*, v. iii. n. [illegible]

Dr. Kippis [1] has hitherto discharged the task judiciously, distinctly, and with more impartiality than might have been expected from a Separatist, it were to have been wished that the superintendence of this literary Temple of Fame had been assigned to "a friend to the constitution in church and state." We should not then have had it too much crowded with obscure dissenting teachers, doubtless men of merit and worth, but not quite to be numbered amongst "the most eminent persons who have flourished in Great Britain and Ireland [2]."

On Saturday, September 20, after breakfast, when Taylor was gone out to his farm, Dr. Johnson and I had a serious conversation by ourselves on melancholy and madness; which he was, I always thought, er-

[1] After having given to the publick the first five volumes of a new edition of the BIOGRAPHIA BRITANNICA, between the years 1778 and 1793, Dr. Kippis died, October 8, 1795; and the work is not likely to be soon completed.—MALONE.

[2] In this censure, which has been carelessly uttered, I carelessly joined. But in justice to Dr. Kippis, who, with that manly candid good temper which marks his character, set me right, I now with pleasure retract it; and I desire it may be particularly observed, as pointed out by him to me, that "The new lives of dissenting divines, in the first four volumes of the second edition of the 'Biographia Britannica,' are those of John Abernethy, Thomas Amory, George Benson, Hugh Broughton, the learned puritan, Simon Browne, Joseph Boyse, of Dublin, Thomas Cartwright, the learned puritan, and Samuel Chandler. The only doubt I have ever heard suggested is, whether there should have been an article of Dr. Amory. But I was convinced, and am still convinced, that he was entitled to one, from the reality of his learning, and the excellent and candid nature of his practical writings.

"The new lives of clergymen of the church of England, in the same four volumes, are as follows: John Balguy, Edward Bentham, George Berkley, Bishop of Cloyne, William Berriman, Thomas Birch, William Borlase, Thomas Bott, James Bradley, Thomas Broughton, John Browne, John Burton, Joseph Butler, Bishop of Durham, Thomas Carte, Edmund Castell, Edmund Chishull, Charles Churchill, William Clarke, Robert Clayton, Bishop of Clogher, John Conybeare, Bishop of Bristol, George Castard, and Samuel Croxall.—'I am not conscious,' says Dr. Kippis, 'of any partiality in conducting the work. I would not willingly insert a dissenting minister that does not justly deserve to be noticed, or omit an established clergyman that does. At the same time, I shall not be deterred from introducing dissenters into the Biographia, when I am satisfied that they are entitled to that distinction, from their writings, learning, and merit.'"

Let me add that the expression "A friend to the constitution in church and state," was not meant by me as any reflection upon this reverend gentleman, as if he were an enemy to the political constitution of his country, as established at the Revolution, but, from my steady and avowed predilection for a *tory*, was quoted from "Johnson's Dictionary," where that distinction is so defined.—BOSWELL.

roneously inclined to confound together. Melancholy, like "great wit," may be "near allied to madness;" but there is, in my opinion, a distinct separation between them. When he talked of madness, he was to be understood as speaking of those who were in any great degree disturbed, or as it is commonly expressed, "troubled in mind." Some of the ancient philosophers held, that all deviations from right reason were madness; and whoever wishes to see the opinions both of ancients and moderns upon this subject, collected and illustrated with a variety of curious facts, may read Dr. Arnold's very entertaining work[1].

Johnson said, "A madman loves to be with people whom he fears; not as a dog fears the lash: but of whom he stands in awe." I was struck with the justice of this observation. To be with those of whom a person, whose mind is wavering and dejected, stands in awe, represses and composes an uneasy tumult of spirits[2], and consoles him with the contemplation of something steady, and at least comparatively great.

He added, "Madmen are all sensual in the lower stages of the distemper. They are eager for gratifications to sooth their minds, and divert their attention from the misery which they suffer; but when they grow very ill, pleasure is too weak for them, and they seek for pain[3]. Employment, sir, and hardships,

[1] "Observations on Insanity," by Thomas Arnold, M.D. London, 1782.—BOSWELL.

[2] Cardan composed his mind tending to madness (or rather actually mad, for such he seems in his writings, learned as they are), by exciting voluntary pain. V. Card. Op. et Vit.—KEARNEY.

[3] We read in the gospels, that those unfortunate persons, who were possessed with evil spirits (which, after all, I think is the most probable cause of madness, as was first suggested to me by my respectable friend Sir John Pringle), had recourse to pain, tearing themselves, and jumping sometimes into the fire, sometimes into the water. Mr. Seward has furnished me with a remarkable anecdote in confirmation of Dr. Johnson's observation. A tradesman who had acquired a large fortune in London retired from business, and went to live at Worcester. His mind, being without its usual occupation, and having nothing else to supply its place, preyed upon itself, so that existence was a torment to him. At last he was seized with the stone; and a friend who found him in one

prevent melancholy. I suppose, in all our army in America, there was not one man who went mad."

["He was," says Sir J. Hawkins, "a great enemy to the present fashionable way of supposing worthless and infamous persons mad."] [This probably meant that he disapproved of the degree of impunity which is sometimes afforded to crime, under the plea of insanity, for it seems almost certain that he thought (and perhaps felt) that the exercises of piety, and the restraints of conscience, might repress a tendency towards insanity. So at least Miss Reynolds believed.] ["It was doubtless," she says, "very natural for so good a man to keep a strict watch over his mind; but one so very strict as Dr. Johnson kept may, perhaps, in some measure be attributed to his dread of its hereditary tendencies, which, I had reason to believe, he was very apprehensive bordered upon insanity. Probably his studious attention to repel their prevalency, together with his experience of divine assistance co-operating with his reasoning faculties, may have proved in the highest degree conducive to the exaltation of his piety, the pre-eminency of his wisdom, and I think it probable that all his natural defects, which so peculiarly debarred him from unprofitable amusements, were also conducive to the same end.

"That Dr. Johnson's mind was preserved from insanity by his devotional aspirations, may surely be reasonably supposed. No man could have a firmer reliance on the efficacy of prayer; and he would often, with a solemn earnestness, beg of his intimate friends to pray for him, and apparently on very slight occasions of corporeal indisposition."]

Hawk. Apoph. p. 203. Ed.

Reyn. Recoll.

of its severest fits, having expressed his concern, "No, no, sir," said he, "don't pity me; what I now feel is ease, compared with that torture of mind from which it relieves me."—Boswell.

We entered seriously upon a question of much importance to me, which Johnson was pleased to consider with friendly attention. I had long complained to him that I felt myself discontented in Scotland, as too narrow a sphere, and that I wished to make my chief residence in London, the great scene of ambition, instruction, and amusement; a scene which was to me, comparatively speaking, a heaven upon earth. JOHNSON. "Why, sir, I never knew any one who had such a *gust* for London as you have: and I cannot blame you for your wish to live there; yet, sir, were I in your father's place, I should not consent to your settling there; for I have the old feudal notions, and I should be afraid that Auchinleck would be deserted, as you would soon find it more desirable to have a country-seat in a better climate. I own, however, that to consider it as a *duty* to reside on a family estate is a prejudice; for we must consider, that working-people get employment equally, and the produce of land is sold equally, whether a great family resides at home or not; and if the rents of an estate be carried to London, they return again in the circulation of commerce; nay, sir, we must perhaps allow, that carrying the rents to a distance is a good, because it contributes to that circulation. We must, however, allow, that a well-regulated great family may improve a neighbourhood in civility and elegance, and give an example of good order, virtue, and piety; and so its residence at home may be of much advantage. But if a great family be disorderly and vicious, its residence at home is very pernicious to a neighbourhood. There is not now the same inducement to live in the country as formerly; the pleasures of social life are much better enjoyed in town; and there is no longer in the country that power and in-

fluence in proprietors of land which they had in old times, and which made the country so agreeable to them. The Laird of Auchinleck now is not near so great a man as the Laird of Auchinleck was a hundred years ago."

I told him, that one of my ancestors never went from home without being attended by thirty men on horseback. Johnson's shrewdness and spirit of inquiry were exerted upon every occasion. "Pray," said he, "how did your ancestor support his thirty men and thirty horses when he went at a distance from home, in an age when there was hardly any money in circulation?" I suggested the same difficulty to a friend who mentioned Douglas's going to the Holy Land with a numerous train of followers[1]. Douglas could, no doubt, maintain followers enough while living upon his own lands, the produce of which supplied them with food; but he could not carry that food to the Holy Land; and as there was no commerce by which he could be supplied with money, how could he maintain them in foreign countries?

I suggested a doubt, that if I were to reside in London, the exquisite zest with which I relished it in occasional visits might go off, and I might grow tired of it. JOHNSON. "Why, sir, you find no man, at all intellectual, who is willing to leave London. No, sir, when a man is tired of London, he is tired of life; for there is in London all that life can afford."

To obviate his apprehension, that by settling in London I might desert the seat of my ancestors, I

[1] ["James de Douglas was requested by King Robert Bruce in his last hours to repair with his heart to Jerusalem, and humbly to deposit it at the sepulchre of our Lord;" which he did in 1329.—*Hailes's Ann.* 2. 146. Hence the *crowned heart* in the arms of Douglas.—ED.]

assured him that I had old feudal principles to a degree of enthusiasm; and that I felt all the *dulcedo* of the *natale solum.* I reminded him, that the Laird of Auchinleck had an elegant house, in front of which he could ride ten miles forward upon his own territories, upon which he had upwards of six hundred people attached to him; that the family seat was rich in natural romantick beauties of rock, wood, and water; and that in my "morn of life" I had appropriated the finest descriptions in the ancient classicks to certain scenes there, which were thus associated in my mind. That when all this was considered, I should certainly pass a part of the year at home, and enjoy it the more from variety, and from bringing with me a share of the intellectual stores of the metropolis. He listened to all this, and kindly "hoped it might be as I now supposed."

He said, a country gentleman should bring his lady to visit London as soon as he can, that they may have agreeable topicks for conversation when they are by themselves.

As I meditated trying my fortune in Westminster Hall, our conversation turned upon the profession of the law in England. JOHNSON. "You must not indulge too sanguine hopes, should you be called to our bar. I was told, by a very sensible lawyer, that there are a great many chances against any man's success in the profession of the law; the candidates are so numerous, and those who get large practice so few. He said, it was by no means true that a man of good parts and application is sure of having business, though he, indeed, allowed that if such a man could but appear in a few causes, his merit would be known, and he would get forward; but that the great risk was, that a man might pass half a life-time in

the courts, and never have an opportunity of showing his abilities[1]."

We talked of employment being absolutely necessary to preserve the mind from wearying and growing fretful, especially in those who have a tendency to melancholy; and I mentioned to him a saying which somebody had related of an American savage, who, when an European was expatiating on all the advantages of money, put this question: "Will it purchase *occupation?*" JOHNSON. "Depend upon it, sir, this saying is too refined for a savage. And, sir, money *will* purchase occupation; it will purchase all the conveniences of life; it will purchase variety of company; it will purchase all sorts of entertainment[2]."

I talked to him of Forster's "Voyage to the South Seas," which pleased me; but I found he did not like it. "Sir," said he, "there is a great affectation of fine writing in it." BOSWELL. "But he carries you along with him." JOHNSON. "No, sir; he does not carry *me* along with him; he leaves me behind him; or rather, indeed, he sets me before him; for he makes me turn over many leaves at a time."

On Sunday, September 12, we went to the church of Ashbourne, which is one of the largest and most luminous that I have seen in any town of the same size. I felt great satisfaction in considering that I was supported in my fondness for solemn publick

[1] Now, at the distance of fifteen years since this conversation passed, the observation which I have had an opportunity of making in Westminster Hall has convinced me, that, however true the opinion of Dr. Johnson's legal friend may have been some time ago, the same certainty of success cannot now be promised to the same display of merit. The reasons, however, of the rapid rise of some, and the disappointment of others equally respectable, are such as it might seem invidious to mention, and would require a longer detail than would be proper for this work.—BOSWELL. [Mr. Boswell's personal feelings here have clouded his perception, for Johnson's friend was far from holding out any thing like a *certainty* of success—nay, it seems to have scarcely allowed a probability.—ED.]

[2] [Nay, it may be said to purchase or rather to create *occupation* too. No man can have riches without the trouble that in different degrees must accompany them.—ED.]

worship by the general concurrence and munificence of mankind.

Johnson and Taylor were so different from each other, that I wondered at their preserving an intimacy. Their having been at school and college together might, in some degree, account for this; but Sir Joshua Reynolds has furnished me with a stronger reason; for Johnson mentioned to him, that he had been told by Taylor he was to be his heir. I shall not take upon me to animadvert upon this; but certain it is that Johnson paid great attention to Taylor. He now, however, said to me, "Sir, I love him; but I do not love him more; my regard for him does not increase. As it is said in the Apocrypha, 'his talk is of bullocks[1].' I do not suppose he is very fond of my company. His habits are by no means sufficiently clerical: this he knows that I see; and no man likes to live under the eye of perpetual disapprobation."

I have no doubt that a good many sermons were composed for Taylor by Johnson. At this time I found upon his table a part of one which he had newly begun to write: and *Concio pro Tayloro* appears in one of his diaries. When to these circumstances we add the internal evidence from the power of thinking and style, in the collection which the Reverend Mr. Hayes had published, with the *significant* title of "Sermons *left for Publication*, by the Reverend John Taylor, LL.D.," our conviction will be complete.

I, however, would not have it thought that Dr. Taylor, though he could not write like Johnson (as, indeed, who could?), did not sometimes compose sermons as good as those which we generally have

[1] Ecclesiasticus, chap. xxxviii. v. 25. The whole chapter may be read as an admirable illustration of the superiority of cultivated minds over the gross and illiterate.—BOSWELL.

from very respectable divines. He showed me one with notes on the margin in Johnson's hand-writing; and I was present when he read another to Johnson, that he might have his opinion of it, and Johnson said it was "very well." These, we may be sure, were not Johnson's; for he was above little arts, or tricks of deception.

Johnson was by no means of opinion that every man of a learned profession should consider it as incumbent upon him, or as necessary to his credit, to appear as an authour. When, in the ardour of ambition for literary fame, I regretted to him one day that an eminent judge[1] had nothing of it, and therefore would leave no perpetual monument of himself to posterity; "Alas! sir," said Johnson, "what a mass of confusion should we have, if every bishop, and every judge, every lawyer, physician, and divine, were to write books!"

I mentioned to Johnson a respectable person of a very strong mind[2], who had little of that tenderness which is common to human nature; as an instance of which, when I suggested to him that he should invite his son, who had been settled ten years in foreign parts, to come home and pay him a visit, his answer was, "No, no, let him mind his business." JOHNSON. "I do not agree with him, sir, in this. Getting money is not all a man's business: to cultivate kindness is a valuable part of the business of life."

In the evening, Johnson, being in very good spirits, entertained us with several characteristical portraits; I regret that any of them escaped my retention and diligence. I found from experience, that to collect

[1] [Probably Lord Mansfield.—ED.]

[2] [He means his father, old Lord Auchinleck; and the absent son was David, who spent so many years in Spain.—ED.]

my friend's conversation so as to exhibit it with any degree of its original flavour, it was necessary to write it down without delay. To record his sayings, after some distance of time, was like preserving or pickling long-kept and faded fruits, or other vegetables, which, when in that state, have little or nothing of their taste when fresh.

I shall present my readers with a series of what I gathered this evening from the Johnsonian garden.

"My friend, the late Earl of Corke, had a great desire to maintain the literary character of his family: he was a genteel man, but did not keep up the dignity of his rank. He was so generally civil, that nobody thanked him for it."

"Did we not hear so much said of Jack Wilkes, we should think more highly of his conversation. Jack has a great variety of talk, Jack is a scholar, and Jack has the manners of a gentleman. But after hearing his name sounded from pole to pole, as the phœnix of convivial felicity, we are disappointed in his company. He has always been at *me:* but I would do Jack a kindness, rather than not[1]. The contest is now over."

"Garrick's gaiety of conversation has delicacy and elegance; Foote makes you laugh more; but Foote has the air of a buffoon paid for entertaining the company. He, indeed, well deserves his hire." ["Foote's happiness of manner in relating was such," Johnson said, "as subdued arrogance and roused stupidity: *his* stories were truly like those of Biron, in Love's Labour Lost, so *very* attractive

Piozzi, p. 133.

> 'That aged ears play'd truant with his tales,
> And younger hearings were quite ravished,
> So sweet and voluble was his discourse.'"

[1] [See *post*, 21st May, 1783.—Ed.]

"Of all conversers, however," added he, "the late Hawkins Browne was the most delightful with whom I ever was in company; his talk was at once so elegant, so apparently artless, so pure, and so pleasing, it seemed a perpetual stream of sentiment, enlivened by gaiety, and sparkling with images." Mrs. Piozzi used to think Mr. Johnson's determined preference of a cold, monotonous talker over an emphatical and violent one, would make him quite a favourite among the men of *ton*, whose insensibility, or affectation of perpetual calmness, certainly did not give to him the offence it does to many. He loved "conversation without effort," he said; and the encomiums which he so often pronounced on the manners of Topham Beauclerc in society constantly ended in that peculiar praise, that "it was without *effort.*"] Piozzi, p. 134. 142.

"Colley Cibber once consulted me as to one of his birthday odes, a long time before it was wanted. I objected very freely to several passages. Cibber lost patience, and would not read his ode to an end. When we had done with criticism we walked over to Richardson's, the authour of 'Clarissa,' and I wondered to find Richardson displeased that I 'did not treat Cibber with more *respect.*' Now, sir, to talk of *respect* for a *player*[1]!" (smiling disdainfully.) BOSWELL. "There, sir, you are always heretical: you never will allow merit to a player." JOHNSON. "Merit, sir! what merit? Do you respect a rope-dancer or a ballad-singer?" BOSWELL. "No, sir; but we respect a great player, as a man who can conceive lofty sentiments, and can express them

[1] [Perhaps Richardson's displeasure was created by Johnson's paying no respect to the *age* of Cibber, who was almost old enough to have been his grandfather. Cibber had left the stage, and ceased to be a player before Johnson left Oxford; so that he had no more reason to despise Cibber for that profession, than Cibber would have had if he had recalled to him the days when he was usher at a school.—ED.]

gracefully." JOHNSON. "What, sir, a fellow who claps a hump on his back, and a lump on his leg, and cries, 'I *am Richard the Third?*' Nay, sir, a ballad-singer is a higher man, for he does two things; he repeats and he sings: there is both recitation and musick in his performance; the player only recites." BOSWELL. "My dear sir! you may turn any thing into ridicule. I allow, that a player of farce is not entitled to respect; he does a little thing: but he who can represent exalted characters, and touch the noblest passions, has very respectable powers; and mankind have agreed in admiring great talents for the stage. We must consider, too, that a great player does what very few are capable to do; his art is a very rare faculty. *Who* can repeat Hamlet's soliloquy, 'To be, or not to be,' as Garrick does it?" JOHNSON. "Any body may. Jemmy, there (a boy about eight years old, who was in the room), will do it as well in a week." BOSWELL. "No, no, sir: and as a proof of the merit of great acting, and of the value which mankind set upon it, Garrick has got a hundred thousand pounds." JOHNSON. "Is getting a hundred thousand pounds a proof of excellence? That has been done by a scoundrel commissary."

This was most fallacious reasoning. I was *sure*, for once, that I had the best side of the argument. I boldly maintained the just distinction between a tragedian and a mere theatrical droll; between those who rouse our terrour and pity, and those who only make us laugh. "If," said I, "Betterton and Foote were to walk into this room, you would respect Betterton much more than Foote." JOHNSON. "If Betterton were to walk into this room with Foote, Foote would soon drive him out of it. Foote, sir, *quatenùs* Foote, has powers superiour to them all." [The fact was, that Johnson could not see the pas-

sions as they rose and chased one another in the varied features of the expressive face of Garrick. Mr. Murphy remembered being in conversation with Johnson near the side of the scenes, during the tragedy of King Lear: when Garrick came off the stage, he said, "You two talk so loud, you destroy all my feelings." "Prithee," replied Johnson, "do not talk of feelings; Punch has no feelings."] Murph. p. 145.

On Monday, September 22, when at breakfast, I unguardedly said to Dr. Johnson, "I wish I saw you and Mrs. Macaulay together." He grew very angry; and, after a pause, while a cloud gathered on his brow, he burst out, "No, sir; you would not see us quarrel, to make you sport. Don't you know that it is very uncivil to *pit* two people against one another?" Then, checking himself, and wishing to be more gentle, he added, "I do not say you should be hanged or drowned for this; but it *is* very uncivil." Dr. Taylor thought him in the wrong, and spoke to him privately of it; but I afterwards acknowledged to Johnson that I was to blame, for I candidly owned, that I meant to express a desire to see a contest between Mrs. Macaulay and him; but then I knew how the contest would end; so that I was to see him triumph. JOHNSON. "Sir, you cannot be sure how a contest will end; and no man has a right to engage two people in a dispute by which their passions may be inflamed, and they may part with bitter resentment against each other. I would sooner keep company with a man from whom I must guard my pockets, than with a man who contrives to bring me into a dispute with somebody that he may hear it. This is the great fault of ——— [1] (naming one of

[1] [Mr. Langton is, no doubt, meant here, and in the next paragraph. See the affair of the 7th May, 1773 (vol. ii. p. 239 and 323); where the reader will find the cause of Johnson's frequent and fretful recurrence to this complaint.—ED.]

our friends), endeavouring to introduce a subject upon which he knows two people in the company differ." BOSWELL. "But he told me, sir, he does it for instruction." JOHNSON. "Whatever the motive be, sir, the man who does so, does very wrong. He has no more right to instruct himself at such risk, than he has to make two people fight a duel, that he may learn how to defend himself."

He found great fault with a gentleman of our acquaintance for keeping a bad table. "Sir," said he, "when a man is invited to dinner, he is disappointed if he does not get something good. I advised Mrs. Thrale, who has no card-parties at her house, to give sweetmeats, and such good things, in an evening, as are not commonly given, and she would find company enough come to her; for every body loves to have things which please the palate put in their way, without trouble or preparation." [And of another lady's entertainments, he said, "What signifies going thither? there is neither meat, drink, nor talk."] Such was his attention to the *minutiæ* of life and manners.

Hawk. Apoph. p. 207.

He thus characterised the Duke of Devonshire, grandfather of the present representative of that very respectable family: "He was not a man of superiour abilities, but he was a man strictly faithful to his word. If, for instance, he had promised you an acorn, and none had grown that year in his woods, he would not have contented himself with that excuse: he would have sent to Denmark for it. So unconditional was he in keeping his word; so high as to the point of honour." This was a liberal testimony from the tory Johnson to the virtue of a great whig nobleman.

Mr. Burke's "Letter to the Sheriffs of Bristol, on the Affairs of America," being mentioned, Johnson

censured the composition much, and he ridiculed the definition of a free government, *viz.* "For any practical purpose, it is what the people thinks so[1]." "I will let the King of France govern me on those conditions," said he, "for it is to be governed just as I please." And when Dr. Taylor talked of a girl being sent to a parish workhouse, and asked how much she could be obliged to work, "Why," said Johnson, "as much as is reasonable; and what is that? as much as *she thinks* reasonable."

Dr. Johnson obligingly proposed to carry me to see Ilam, a romantick scene, now belonging to a family of the name of Port, but formerly the seat of the Congreves[2]. I suppose it is well described in some of the tours. Johnson described it distinctly and vividly, at which I could not but express to him my wonder; because, though my eyes, as he observed, were better than his, I could not by any means equal him in representing visible objects. I said, the difference between us in this respect was as that between a man who has a bad instrument, but plays well on it, and a man who has a good instrument, on which he can play very imperfectly.

I recollect a very fine amphitheatre, surrounded with hills covered with woods, and walks neatly formed along the side of a rocky steep, on the quarter next the house, with recesses under projections of rock, over-shadowed with trees; in one of which recesses, we were told, Congreve wrote his "Old Bachelor." We viewed a remarkable natural curiosity at Ilam; two rivers bursting near each other

[1] Edit. 2, p. 53.—BOSWELL.

[2] [This is a mistake. The Ports had been seated at Ilam time out of mind. Congreve had visited that family at Ilam; and *his seat*, that is, *the bench* on which he sometimes sat, in the gardens, used to be shown: this, Mr. Bernard Port—one of the ancient family, and now vicar of Ilam—thinks was the cause of Mr. Boswell's error.—ED.]

from the rock, not from immediate springs, but after having run for many miles under ground. Plott, in his "History of Staffordshire [1]," gives an account of this curiosity; but Johnson would not believe it, though we had the attestation of the gardener, who said he had put in corks [2], where the river *Manyfold* sinks into the ground, and had catched them in a net, placed before one of the openings where the water bursts out. Indeed, such subterraneous courses of water are found in various parts of our globe [3].

Talking of Dr. Johnson's unwillingness to believe extraordinary things, I ventured to say, "Sir, you come near Hume's argument against miracles, 'That it is more probable witnesses should lie, or be mistaken, than that they should happen.'" JOHNSON. "Why, sir, Hume, taking the proposition simply, is right [4]. But the Christian revelation is not proved by the miracles alone, but as connected with prophecies, and with the doctrines in confirmation of which the miracles were wrought."

He repeated his observation, that the differences among Christians are really of no consequence. "For instance," said he, "if a Protestant objects to a Papist, 'You worship images;' the Papist can answer, 'I do not insist on your doing it; you may be a very good Papist without it; I do it only as a help to my devotion.'" I said, the great article of Christianity

[1] Page 89.

[2] [The gardener at Ilam told the editor that it was *Johnson himself* who had made this experiment; but there is not the least doubt of the fact. The river sinks suddenly into the earth behind a hill above the valley, and bursts out again in the same direction, and with the same body of water, about four miles below.—ED.]

[3] See Plott's "History of Staffordshire," p. 88, and the authorities referred to by him.—BOSWELL.

[4] [This is not quite true. It is indeed more probable that one or two interested witnesses should lie, than that a miracle should have happened; but that *distant* and *unconnected witnesses* and *circumstances* should undesignedly concur in evidencing a falsehood—and that falsehood one in itself unnatural—would be more miraculous than any miracle in Scripture; and thus *by Hume's own argument* the balance of probability is in favour of the miracles.—ED.]

is the revelation of immortality[1]. Johnson admitted it was.

In the evening, a gentleman farmer, who was on a visit at Dr. Taylor's, attempted to dispute with Johnson in favour of Mungo Campbell[2], who shot Alexander, Earl of Eglintoune, upon his having fallen, when retreating from his lordship, who he believed was about to seize his gun, as he had threatened to do. He said he should have done just as Campbell did. JOHNSON. "Whoever would do as Campbell did, deserves to be hanged; not that I could, as a juryman, have found him legally guilty of murder; but I am glad they found means to convict him." The gentleman farmer said, "A poor man has as much honour as a rich man; and Campbell had *that* to defend." Johnson exclaimed, "A poor man has no honour." The English yeoman, not dismayed, proceeded: "Lord Eglintoune was a damned fool to run on upon Campbell, after being warned that Campbell would shoot him if he did." Johnson, who could not bear any thing like swearing, angrily replied, "He was *not* a *damned* fool: he only thought too well of Campbell. He did not believe Campbell would be such a *damned* scoundrel, as to do so *damned* a thing." His emphasis on *damned*,

[1] [This is loosely expressed. The *ancients* believed in immortality, and even a state of retribution. Warburton argues that Moses was not ignorant of, and the *Mahomedans* acknowledge, a future state. On so vital a question it is not safe to rest on Mr. Boswell's colloquial phrases, which have some importance when they appear to be sanctioned by the concurrence of Dr. Johnson. *Immortality* is, indeed, *assured*, and a thousand social blessings and benefits are vouchsafed to us by the Christian revelation; but "*the great article of Christianity*" is surely the ATONEMENT!—ED.]

[2] [Campbell terminated his own life in prison. It is hardly to be believed, (though there was every such appearance), that the government could have permitted him to be executed; for Lord Eglintoune was grossly the aggressor, and Campbell fired (whether accidentally or designedly) when in the act of falling, as he *retreated from* Lord Eglintoune. It does no credit to Johnson to have it recorded that he said that *he was glad they had* FOUND MEANS *to convict* a man whom he would not, on his own responsibility, have found guilty. Lord Eglintoune was a friend of Mr. Boswell's, and the son of the lady who treated Johnson with such flattering attention.—See *ante*, vol. iii. p. 70.—ED.]

accompanied with frowning looks, reproved his opponent's want of decorum in *his* presence.

Talking of the danger of being mortified by rejection, when making approaches to the acquaintance of the great, I observed, "I am, however, generally for trying, 'Nothing venture, nothing have.'" JOHNSON. "Very true, sir; but I have always been more afraid of failing, than hopeful of success." And, indeed, though he had all just respect for rank, no man ever less courted the favour of the great.

During this interview at Ashbourne, Johnson seemed to be more uniformly social, cheerful, and alert, than I had almost ever seen him. He was prompt on great occasions and on small. Taylor, who praised every thing of his own to excess, in short, "whose geese were all swans," as the proverb says, expatiated on the excellence of his bull-dog, which he told us was "perfectly well shaped." Johnson, after examining the animal attentively, thus repressed the vain-glory of our host:—"No, sir, he is *not* well shaped; for there is not the quick transition from the thickness of the fore-part, to the *tenuity*—the thin part—behind,—which a bull-dog ought to have." This *tenuity* was the only *hard word* that I heard him use during this interview, and it will be observed, he instantly put another expression in its place. Taylor said, a small bull-dog was as good as a large one. JOHNSON. "No, sir: for, in proportion to his size, he has strength: and your argument would prove, that a good bull-dog may be as small as a mouse." It was amazing how he entered with perspicuity and keenness upon every thing that occurred in conversation. Most men, whom I know, would no more think of discussing a question about a bull-dog, than of attacking a bull.

I cannot allow any fragment whatever that floats

in my memory concerning the great subject of this work to be lost. Though a small particular may appear trifling to some, it will be relished by others; while every little spark adds something to the general blaze: and to please the true, candid, warm admirers of Johnson, and in any degree increase the splendour of his reputation, I bid defiance to the shafts of ridicule, or even of malignity. Showers of them have been discharged at my "Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides;" yet it still sails unhurt along the stream of time, and as an attendant upon Johnson,

"Pursues the triumph, and partakes the gale."

One morning after breakfast, when the sun shone bright, we walked out together, and "pored" for some time with placid indolence upon an artificial waterfall, which Dr. Taylor had made by building a strong dyke of stone across the river behind the garden. It was now somewhat obstructed by branches of trees and other rubbish, which had come down the river, and settled close to it. Johnson, partly from a desire to see it play more freely, and partly from that inclination to activity which will animate, at times, the most inert and sluggish mortal, took a long pole which was lying on a bank, and pushed down several parcels of this wreck with painful assiduity, while I stood quietly by, wondering to behold the sage thus curiously employed, and smiling with a humorous satisfaction each time when he carried his point. He worked till he was quite out of breath; and having found a large dead cat so heavy that he could not move it after several efforts, "Come," said he (throwing down the pole), "*you* shall take it now;" which I accordingly did, and being a fresh man, soon made the cat tumble over the cascade. This may be laughed at as too trifling to record; but it is a small characteristic trait in the Flemish picture which I

give of my friend, and in which, therefore, I mark the most minute particulars. And let it be remembered, that "Æsop at play" is one of the instructive apologues of antiquity.

I mentioned an old gentleman of our acquaintance whose memory was beginning to fail. JOHNSON. "There must be a diseased mind, where there is a failure of memory at seventy. A man's head, sir, must be morbid, if he fails so soon[1]." My friend, being now himself sixty-eight, might think thus: but I imagine, that *threescore and ten*, the Psalmist's period of sound human life in later ages, may have a failure, though there be no disease in the constitution.

Ps. xc. v. 10.

Talking of Rochester's Poems, he said, he had given them to Mr. Steevens to castrate[2] for the edition of the poets, to which he was to write prefaces. Dr. Taylor (the only time I ever heard him say any thing witty)[3] observed, that "if Rochester had been castrated himself, his exceptionable poems would not have been written." I asked if Burnet had not given a good Life of Rochester. JOHNSON. "We have a good *Death;* there is not much *Life.*" I asked whether Prior's poems were to be printed entire: Johnson said they were. I mentioned Lord Hailes's censure of Prior, in his preface to a collection of "Sacred Poems," by various hands, published by him at Edinburgh a great many years ago, where he mentions "those impure tales which will be the eternal opprobrium of their ingenious authour." JOHNSON. "Sir, Lord Hailes has forgot. There is

[1] [This is one of those violent and absurd assertions into which Johnson was so often betrayed by his private feelings and prejudices: the Psalmist says, and successive ages have proved, that the years of man are threescore years and ten; yet, because Johnson was now near seventy, he ventures to assert that any decay of the intellect at that age must be morbid.—ED.]

[2] This was unnecessary, for it had been done in the early part of the present century by Jacob Tonson.—MALONE.

[3] I am told that Horace, Earl of Orford, has a collection of *Bon-Mots* by persons who never said but one.—BOSWELL.

nothing in Prior that will excite to lewdness. 'If Lord Hailes thinks there is, he must be more combustible than other people." I instanced the tale of "Paulo Purganti and his wife." JOHNSON. "Sir, there is nothing there, but that his wife wanted to be kissed, when poor Paulo was out of pocket. No, sir, Prior is a lady's book. No lady is ashamed to have it standing in her library [1].

The hypochondriack disorder being mentioned, Dr. Johnson did not think it so common as I supposed. "Dr. Taylor," said he, "is the same one day as another. Burke and Reynolds are the same. Beauclerk, except when in pain, is the same. I am not so myself; but this I do not mention commonly."

I complained of a wretched changefulness, so that I could not preserve, for any long continuance, the same views of any thing. It was most comfortable to me to experience in Dr. Johnson's company a relief from this uneasiness. His steady vigorous mind held firm before me those objects which my own feeble and tremulous imagination frequently presented in such a wavering state, that my reason could not judge well of them.

Dr. Johnson advised me to-day to have as many books about me as I could; that I might read upon any subject upon which I had a desire for instruction at the time. "What you read *then*," said he, "you will remember; but if you have not a book immediately ready, and the subject moulds in your mind, it is a chance if you have again a desire to study it." He added, "if a man never has an eager desire for instruction, he should prescribe a task for himself. But it is better when a man reads from immediate inclination."

[1] [What extraordinary "*laxity of talk!*" It is surprising enough that Mr. Boswell should have recorded any thing so indecent as these expressions; but that Johnson should have maintained such sentiments is very astonishing and very lamentable.—ED.]

Hawk. Apoph. p. 197,8. [He used to say, that no man read long together with a folio on his table. "Books," said he, "that you may carry to the fire, and hold readily in your hand, are the most useful after all." He would say, "such books form the mass of general and easy reading." He was a great friend to books like the French *Esprits d'un tel;* for example, *Beauties of Watts,* &c. &c.: "at which," said he, "a man will often look and be tempted to go on, when he would have been frightened at books of a larger size, and of a more erudite appearance."]

He repeated a good many lines of Horace's Odes while we were in the chaise; I remember particularly the Ode "*Eheu fugaces.*"

He said, the dispute as to the comparative excellence of Homer or Virgil[1] was inaccurate. "We must consider," said he, "whether Homer was not the greatest poet, though Virgil may have produced the finest poem[2]. Virgil was indebted to Homer for the whole invention of the structure of an epick poem, and for many of his beauties."

He told me, that Bacon was a favourite authour with him; but he had never read his works till he was compiling the English Dictionary, in which he said, I might see Bacon very often quoted. Mr. Seward recollects his having mentioned, that a dictionary of the English language might be compiled from Bacon's writings alone, and that he had once an intention of giving an edition of Bacon, at least of his English works, and writing the life of that great man. Had he executed this intention, there

[1] I am informed by Mr. Langton, that a great many years ago he was present when this question was agitated between Dr. Johnson and Mr. Burke; and, to use Johnson's phrase, they "talked their best;" Johnson for Homer, Burke for Virgil. It may well be supposed to have been one of the ablest and most brilliant contests that ever was exhibited. How much must we regret that it has not been preserved!—BOSWELL.

[2] But where is the *inaccuracy,* if the admirers of Homer contend, that he was not only prior to Virgil in point of time, but superiour in excellence?—J. BOSWELL.

can be no doubt that he would have done it in a most masterly manner. Mallet's Life of Bacon has no inconsiderable merit as an acute and elegant dissertation relative to its subject; but Mallet's mind was not comprehensive enough to embrace the vast extent of Lord Verulam's genius and research. Dr. Warburton therefore observed, with witty justness, "that Mallet in his Life of Bacon had forgotten that he was a philosopher; and if he should write the Life of the Duke of Marlborough, which he had undertaken to do, he would probably forget that he was a general."

Wishing to be satisfied what degree of truth there was in a story which a friend of Johnson's and mine had told me to his disadvantage, I mentioned it to him in direct terms; and it was to this effect: that a gentleman[1] who had lived in great intimacy with him, shown him much kindness, and even relieved him from a spunging-house, having afterwards fallen into bad circumstances, was one day, when Johnson was at dinner with him, seized for debt, and carried to prison; that Johnson sat still undisturbed, and went on eating and drinking; upon which the gentleman's sister, who was present, could not suppress her indignation: "What, sir," said she, "are you so unfeeling, as not even to offer to go to my brother in his distress; you who have been so much obliged to him?" And that Johnson answered, "Madam, I owe him no obligation; what he did for me he would have done for a dog."

Johnson assured me, that the story was absolutely false; but, like a man conscious of being in the right, and desirous of completely vindicating himself from such a charge, he did not arrogantly rest on a mere

[1] [There seems reason to believe that this gentleman was Mr. Dyer.—Ed.]

denial, and on his general character, but proceeded thus: "Sir, I was very intimate with that gentleman, and was once relieved by him from an arrest; but I never was present when he was arrested, never knew that he was arrested, and I believe he never was in difficulties after the time when he relieved me. I loved him much; yet, in talking of his general character, I may have said, though I do not remember that I ever did say so, that as his generosity proceeded from no principle, but was a part of his profusion, he would do for a dog what he would do for a friend: but I never applied this remark to any particular instance, and certainly not to his kindness to me. If a profuse man, who does not value his money, and gives a large sum to a prostitute, gives half as much, or an equally large sum to relieve a friend, it cannot be esteemed as virtue. This was all that I could say of that gentleman; and, if said at all, it must have been said after his death. Sir, I would have gone to the world's end to relieve him. The remark about the dog, if made by me, was such a sally as might escape one when painting a man highly."

On Tuesday, September 23, Johnson was remarkably cordial to me. It being necessary for me to return to Scotland soon, I had fixed on the next day for my setting out, and I felt a tender concern at the thought of parting with him. He had, at this time, frankly communicated to me many particulars, which are inserted in this work in their proper places; and once, when I happened to mention that the expense of my jaunt would come to much more than I had computed, he said, "Why, sir, if the expense were to be an inconvenience, you would have reason to regret it; but, if you have had the money to spend, I know not that you could have purchased as much pleasure with it in any other way."

During this interview at Ashbourne, Johnson and I frequently talked with wonderful pleasure of mere trifles which had occurred in our tour to the Hebrides; for it had left a most agreeable and lasting impression upon his mind.

He found fault with me for using the phrase to *make* money. "Don't you see," said he, "the impropriety of it? To *make* money is to *coin* it: you should say *get* money." The phrase, however, is, I think, pretty current. But Johnson was at all times jealous of infractions upon the genuine English language, and prompt to repress colloquial barbarisms; such as *pledging myself* for *undertaking; line* for *department*, or *branch*, as the *civil line*, the *banking line*. He was particularly indignant against the almost universal use of the word *idea*, in the sense of *notion* or *opinion*, when it is clear that *idea* can only signify something of which an image can be formed in the mind. We may have an *idea* or *image* of a mountain, a tree, a building; but we cannot surely have an *idea* or *image* of an *argument* or *proposition*. Yet we hear the sages of the law "delivering their *ideas* upon the question under consideration;" and the first speakers in parliament "entirely coinciding in the *idea* which has been ably stated by an honourable member;" or "reprobating an *idea* unconstitutional, and fraught with the most dangerous consequences to a great and free country." Johnson called this "modern cant."

I perceived that he pronounced the word *heard*[1], as if spelt with a double *e*, *heerd*, instead of sounding

[1] [I consider the pronunciation of this word, which Boswell justly makes an objection to, as provincial; but I think he must have misapprehended Dr. Johnson's "reason." There are many words, in which these three letters occur, that are pronounced similarly, *e. g. earn, learn*, &c.; nor would the single exception be an objection, as uniformity is not the *jus et norma loquendi* in English.—HALL.]

it *herd*, as is most usually done[1]. He said, his reason was, that if it were pronounced *herd*, there would be a single exception from the English pronunciation of the syllable *ear*, and he thought it better not to have that exception.

He praised Grainger's "Ode on Solitude," in Dodsley's collection, and repeated, with great energy, the exordium:

> "O Solitude, romantick maid,
> Whether by nodding towers you tread;
> Or haunt the desert's trackless gloom,
> Or hover o'er the yawning tomb;
> Or climb the Andes' clifted side,
> Or by the Nile's coy source abide;
> Or, starting from your half-year's sleep,
> From Hecla view the thawing deep:
> Or, at the purple dawn of day,
> Tadnor's marble waste survey[2]."

Reyn. Recoll. observing, "This, sir, is very noble." ["I shall never forget," says Miss Reynolds, to whom Johnson also repeated these verses, "the concordance of the sound of his voice with the grandeur of those images; nor, indeed, the gothic dignity of his aspect, his look and manner, when repeating sublime passages. But what was very remarkable, though his cadence in reading poetry was so judiciously emphatical as to give additional force to the words uttered, yet in reading prose, particularly on common or familiar subjects, narrations, essays, letters, &c. nothing could be more injudicious than his manner, beginning every period with a pompous accent, and reading it with a whine, or with a kind of spasmodic struggle for ut-

[1] In the age of Queen Elizabeth this word was frequently written, as doubtless it was pronounced, *hard*.—MALONE.

[2] [In Dodsley's collection, and in Miss Reynolds's Recollections, the two last lines are thus given:

> "Or Tadnor's marble wastes survey,
> Or in yon roofless cloister stray."

But Bishop Percy, in his Reliques, vol. i. p. 264, corrects them as given in the text.—ED.]

terance; and this, not from any natural infirmity, but from a strange singularity, in reading on, in one breath, as if he had made a resolution not to respire till he had closed the sentence."] Reyn. Recoll.

In the evening our gentleman-farmer, and two others, entertained themselves and the company with a great number of tunes on the fiddle. Johnson desired to have "Let Ambition fire thy Mind" played over again, and appeared to give a patient attention to it; though he owned to me that he was very insensible to the power of musick. I told him that it affected me to such a degree, as often to agitate my nerves painfully, producing in my mind alternate sensations of pathetic dejection, so that I was ready to shed tears; and of daring resolution, so that I was inclined to rush into the thickest part of the battle. "Sir," said he, "I should never hear of it, if it made me such a fool."

Much of the effect of musick, I am satisfied, is owing to the association of ideas. That air, which instantly and irresistibly excites in the Swiss, when in a foreign land, the *maladie du pais*, has, I am told, no intrinsick power of sound. And I know from my own experience, that Scotch reels, though brisk, make me melancholy, because I used to hear them in my early years, at a time when Mr. Pitt called for soldiers, "from the mountains of the north," and numbers of brave Highlanders were going abroad, never to return. Whereas the airs in "The Beggar's Opera," many of which are very soft, never fail to render me gay, because they are associated with the warm sensations and high spirits of London. This evening, while some of the tunes of ordinary composition were played with no great skill, my frame was agitated, and I was conscious of a generous attachment to Dr. Johnson, as my preceptor

and friend, mixed with an affectionate regret that he was an old man, whom I should probably lose in a short time. I thought I could defend him at the point of my sword. My reverence and affection for him were in full glow. I said to him, "My dear sir, we must meet every year, if you don't quarrel with me." JOHNSON. "Nay, sir, you are more likely to quarrel with me, than I with you. My regard for you is greater almost than I have words to express; but I do not choose to be always repeating it: write it down in the first leaf of your pocket-book, and never doubt of it again."

I talked to him of misery being "the doom of man," in this life, as displayed in his "Vanity of Human Wishes." Yet I observed that things were done upon the supposition of happiness; grand houses were built, fine gardens were made, splendid places of publick amusement were contrived, and crowded with company. JOHNSON. "Alas, sir, these are only struggles for happiness. When I first entered Ranelagh, it gave an expansion and gay sensation to my mind, such as I never experienced any where else. But, as Xerxes wept when he viewed his immense army, and considered that not one of that great multitude would be alive a hundred years afterwards, so it went to my heart to consider that there was not one in all that brilliant circle that was not afraid to go home and think; but that the thoughts of each individual there would be distressing when alone." This reflection was experimentally just. The feeling of languor [1], which succeeds the animation of gaiety,

[1] Pope mentions,

"Stretch'd on the rack of a too easy chair."

But I recollect a couplet quite apposite to my subject in "Virtue, an Ethick Epistle," a beautiful and instructive poem, by an anonymous writer, in 1758; who, treating of pleasure in excess, says,

"Till languor, suffering on the rack of bliss,
Confess that man was never made for this."—BOSWELL.

is itself a very severe pain; and when the mind is then vacant, a thousand disappointments and vexations rush in and excruciate. Will not many even of my fairest readers allow this to be true?

I suggested, that being in love, and flattered with hopes of success; or having some favourite scheme in view for the next day, might prevent that wretchedness of which we had been talking. JOHNSON. "Why, sir, it may sometimes be so as you suppose; but my conclusion is in general but too true."

While Johnson and I stood in calm conference by ourselves in Dr. Taylor's garden, at a pretty late hour in a serene autumn night, looking up to the heavens, I directed the discourse to the subject of a future state. My friend was in a placid and most benignant frame of mind. "Sir," said he, "I do not imagine that all things will be made clear to us immediately after death, but that the ways of Providence will be explained to us very gradually." I ventured to ask him whether, although the words of some texts of Scripture seemed strong in support of the dreadful doctrine of an eternity of punishment, we might not hope that the denunciation was figurative, and would not literally be executed. JOHNSON. "Sir, you are to consider the intention of punishment in a future state. We have no reason to be sure that we shall then be no longer liable to offend against God. We do not know that even the angels are quite in a state of security; nay, we know that some of them have fallen. It may therefore, perhaps, be necessary, in order to preserve both men and angels in a state of rectitude, that they should have continually before them the punishment of those who have deviated from it; but we hope that by some other means a fall from rectitude may be prevented. Some of the texts of Scripture upon this subject are,

as you observe, indeed strong; but they may admit of a mitigated interpretation." He talked to me upon this awful and delicate question in a gentle tone, and as if afraid to be decisive.

After supper I accompanied him to his apartment, and at my request he dictated to me an argument in favour of the negro who was then claiming his liberty, in an action in the court of session in Scotland. He had always been very zealous against slavery in every form, in which I with all deference thought that he discovered "a zeal without knowledge." Upon one occasion, when in company with some very grave men at Oxford, his toast was, "Here's to the next insurrection of the negroes in the West Indies." His violent prejudice against our West Indian and American settlers appeared whenever there was an opportunity. Towards the conclusion of his "Taxation no Tyranny," he says, "how is it that we hear the loudest *yelps* for liberty among the drivers of negroes?" and in his conversation with Mr. Wilkes[1] he asked, "Where did Beckford and Trecothick learn English?" That Trecothick could both speak and write good English is well known. I myself was favoured with his correspondence concerning the brave Corsicans. And that Beckford could speak it with a spirit of honest resolution even to his majesty, as his "faithful lord mayor of London," is commemorated by the noble monument erected to him in Guildhall.

The argument dictated by Dr. Johnson [will be found in the Appendix].

I record Dr. Johnson's argument fairly upon this particular case; where, perhaps, he was in the right. But I beg leave to enter my most solemn protest

[1] See *ante*, p. 439.—BOSWELL.

against his general doctrine with respect to the slave trade. For I will resolutely say, that his unfavourable notion of it was owing to prejudice, and imperfect or false information. The wild and dangerous attempt which has for some time been persisted in to obtain an act of our legislature, to abolish so very important and necessary a branch of commercial interest, must have been crushed at once, had not the insignificance of the zealots who vainly took the lead in it made the vast body of planters, merchants, and others, whose immense properties are involved in that trade, reasonably enough suppose that there could be no danger. The encouragement which the attempt has received excites my wonder and indignation; and though some men of superior abilities have supported it, whether from a love of temporary popularity when prosperous, or a love of general mischief when desperate, my opinion is unshaken. To abolish a *status*, which in all ages God has sanctioned, and man has continued, would not only be *robbery* to an innumerable class of our fellow-subjects, but it would be extreme cruelty to the African savages, a portion of whom it saves from massacre, or intolerable bondage in their own country, and introduces into a much happier state of life; especially now when their passage to the West Indies and their treatment there is humanely regulated. To abolish that trade would be to

"—— shut the gates of mercy on mankind."

Whatever may have passed elsewhere concerning it, the house of lords is wise and independent:

Intaminatis fulget honoribus;
Nec sumit aut ponit secures
Arbitrio popularis auræ.

I have read, conversed, and thought much upon the

subject, and would recommend to all who are capable of conviction an excellent tract by my learned and ingenious friend, John Ranby, Esq., entitled "Doubts on the Abolition of the Slave Trade." To Mr. Ranby's "Doubts," I will apply Lord Chancellor Hardwicke's expression in praise of a Scotch law book, called "Dirleton's Doubts:" "HIS *doubts*," said his lordship, "are better than most people's *certainties*."

When I said now to Johnson, that I was afraid I kept him too late up, "No, sir," said he, "I don't care though I sit all night with you." This was an animated speech from a man in his sixty-ninth year.

Piozzi, p. 94-5. [Dr. Johnson, as Mrs. Piozzi relates, loved late hours extremely, or more properly hated early ones. Nothing was more terrifying to him than the idea of retiring to bed, which he never would call going to rest, or suffer another to call so. "I lie down," said he, "that my acquaintance may sleep; but I lie down to endure oppressive misery, and soon rise again to pass the night in anxiety and pain." By this pathetic manner, which no one ever possessed in so eminent a degree, he used to shock that lady from quitting his company, till she hurt her own health not a little by sitting up with him when she was herself far from well: nor was it an easy matter to oblige him even by compliance, for he always maintained that no one forbore their own gratifications for the sake of pleasing another, and if one *did* sit up it was probably to amuse one's self. Some right, however, he certainly had to say so, as he made his company exceedingly entertaining when he had once forced one, by his vehement lamentations and piercing reproofs, not to quit the room, but to sit quietly and make tea for him, as Mrs. Thrale often did in London till four o'clock in the morning. At Streatham, she managed better, having always some

friend who was kind enough to engage him in talk, and favour her retreat.]

[Indeed, he has been known to say, "Whoever thinks of going to bed before twelve o'clock is a scoundrel." Having nothing in particular to do himself, and having none of his time appropriated, he was a troublesome guest to persons who had much to do. Hawk. Apoph. p. 211.

He rose too as unwillingly as he went to bed.]

Had I been as attentive not to displease him as I ought to have been, I know not but this vigil might have been fulfilled; but I unluckily entered upon the controversy concerning the right of Great Britain to tax America, and attempted to argue in favour of our fellow-subjects on the other side of the Atlantick. I insisted that America might be very well governed, and made to yield sufficient revenue by the means of *influence*, as exemplified in Ireland, while the people might be pleased with the imagination of their participating of the British constitution, by having a body of representatives, without whose consent money could not be exacted from them. Johnson could not bear my thus opposing his avowed opinion, which he had exerted himself with an extreme degree of heat to enforce; and the violent agitation into which he was thrown, while answering, or rather reprimanding me, alarmed me so, that I heartily repented of my having unthinkingly introduced the subject. I myself, however, grew warm, and the change was great, from the calm state of philosophical discussion in which we had a little before been pleasingly employed.

I talked of the corruption of the British parliament, in which I alleged that any question, however unreasonable or unjust, might be carried by a venal majority; and I spoke with high admiration of the

Roman senate, as if composed of men sincerely desirous to resolve what they should think best for their country. My friend would allow no such character to the Roman senate; and he maintained that the British parliament was not corrupt, and that there was no occasion to corrupt its members; asserting, that there was hardly ever any question of great importance before parliament, any question in which a man might not very well vote either upon one side or the other. He said there had been none in his time except that respecting America.

We were fatigued by the contest, which was produced by my want of caution; and he was not then in the humour to slide into easy and cheerful talk. It therefore so happened, that we were after an hour or two very willing to separate and go to bed.

On Wednesday, September 24, I went into Dr. Johnson's room before he got up, and finding that the storm of the preceding night was quite laid, I sat down upon his bedside, and he talked with as much readiness and good humour as ever. He recommended to me to plant a considerable part of a large moorish farm which I had purchased, and he made several calculations of the expense and profit; for he delighted in exercising his mind on the science of numbers. He pressed upon me the importance of planting at the first in a very sufficient manner, quoting the saying, "*In bello non licet bis errare:*" and adding, "this is equally true in planting."

I spoke with gratitude of Dr. Taylor's hospitality; and as evidence that it was not on account of his good table alone that Johnson visited him often, I mentioned a little anecdote which had escaped my friend's recollection, and at hearing which repeated, he smiled. One evening, when I was sitting with him, Frank delivered this message: "Sir, Dr. Taylor

sends his compliments to you, and begs you will dine with him to-morrow. He has got a hare." "My compliments," said Johnson, "and I 'll dine with him —hare or rabbit."

After breakfast I departed, and pursued my journey northwards.

["TO MRS. THRALE.

"Ashbourne, 25th Sept. 1777. Letters, v. i. p. 384.

"Boswell is gone, and is, I hope, pleased that he has been here; though to look on any thing with pleasure is not very common. He has been gay and good-humoured in his usual way, but we have not agreed upon any other expedition. He had spent more money than he intended, and I supplied him; my deficiencies are again made up by Mr. Thrale's bill, for which I thank him."]

And again.

["Ashbourne, 29th Sept. 1777. vol. i. p. 390.

"Boswell, while he was here, saw Keddlestone and the silk-mills, and took Chatsworth in his way home. He says, his wife does not love me quite well yet, though we have made a formal peace. He kept his journal very diligently; but then what was there to journalise? I should be glad to see what he says of . . . . . [1]. I think I told you that I took him to Ilam [2]."]

I took my post-chaise from the Green Man, a very good inn at Ashbourne, the mistress of which, a mighty civil gentlewoman, courtsying very low, presented me with an engraving of the sign of her house; to which she had subjoined, in her own handwriting, an address in such singular simplicity of style, that I have preserved it pasted upon one of the boards of my original Journal at this time, and shall here insert it for the amusement of my readers:

"M. Killingley's duty waits upon Mr. Boswell, is exceedingly obliged to him for this favour; whenever he comes this

[1] [No doubt Dr. Taylor.—ED.]
[2] [Printed in the *Letters* by mistake *Ham*.—ED.]

way, hopes for a continuance of the same. Would Mr. Boswell name the house to his extensive acquaintance, it would be a singular favour conferred on one who has it not in her power to make any other return but her most grateful thanks, and sincerest prayers for his happiness in time, and in a blessed eternity.

"Tuesday morning."

From this meeting at Ashbourne I derived a considerable accession to my Johnsonian store. I communicated my original Journal to Sir William Forbes, in whom I have always placed deserved confidence; and what he wrote to me concerning it is so much to my credit as the biographer of Johnson, that my readers will, I hope, grant me their indulgence for here inserting it: "It is not once or twice going over it," says Sir William, "that will satisfy me; for I find in it a high degree of instruction as well as entertainment; and I derive more benefit from Dr. Johnson's admirable discussions than I should be able to draw from his personal conversation; for I suppose there is not a man in the world to whom he discloses his sentiments so freely as to yourself."

I cannot omit a curious circumstance which occurred at Edensor-inn, close by Chatsworth, to survey the magnificence of which I had gone a considerable way out of my road to Scotland. The inn was then kept by a very jolly landlord, whose name, I think, was Malton. He happened to mention that "the celebrated Dr. Johnson had been in his house." I inquired *who* this Dr. Johnson was, that I might hear my host's notion of him. "Sir," said he, "Johnson, the great writer; *Oddity*, as they call him. He's the greatest writer in England; he writes for the ministry; he has a correspondence abroad, and lets them know what's going on."

My friend, who had a thorough dependence upon the authenticity of my relation without any *em-*

bellishment, as *falsehood* or *fiction* is too gently called, laughed a good deal at this representation of himself.

["DR. JOHNSON TO MRS. THRALE. Letters, vol. ii. p. 6.

"13th October, 1777.

"Though I am still at Ashbourne, I receive your dear letters that come to Lichfield, and you continue that direction, for I think to get thither as soon as I can.

* * * * * *

"I cannot but think on your kindness and my *master's*. Life has, upon the whole, fallen short, very short, of my early expectation; but the acquisition of such a friendship, at an age when new friendships are seldom acquired, is something better than the general course of things gives man a right to expect. I think on it with great delight.—I am not very apt to be delighted."

"TO MRS. THRALE. Letters, vol. ii. p. 10.

"Lichfield, 22d October, 1777.

"I am come, at last, to Lichfield, and am really glad that I have got away from a place where there was indeed no evil, but very little good. You may, I believe, write once to Lichfield after you receive this, but after that it will be best to direct to London.

* * * * * *

"My visit to Stowhill has been paid. I have seen there a collection of misery. Mrs. Aston paralytick, Mrs. Walmsley lame, Mrs. Hervey blind, and I think another lady deaf. Even such is life.

"I hope dear Mrs. Aston is a little better; it is, however, very little. She was, I believe, glad to see me; and to have any body glad to see me is a great pleasure [1]."

"TO MRS. THRALE. Letters, vol. ii. p. 16.

"Lichfield, 29th Oct. 1777.

"Though after my last letter I might justly claim an interval of rest, yet I write again to tell you, that for this turn you will hear but once more from Lichfield. This day is Wednesday —on Saturday I shall write again, and on Monday I shall set out to seek adventures; for you know—

None but the brave desert the fair.

[1] Mr. Johnson sends his compliments to the ladies at Stowhill, of whom he would have taken a more formal leave, but that he was willing to spare a ceremony which he hopes would have been no pleasure to them, and would have been painful to himself.

Letters, v. ii. p. 16.

"On Monday we hope to see Birmingham, the seat of the mechanick arts; and I know not whether our next stage will be Oxford, the mansion of the liberal arts; or London, the residence of all the arts together. The chymists call the world *Academia Paracelsi*; my ambition is to be his fellow-student—to see the works of nature, and hear the lectures of truth. To London, therefore! London may, perhaps, fill me; and I hope to fill my part of London.]

["DR. JOHNSON TO MRS. ASTON.

"London, 20th Nov. 1777.

Pem. MS.

"DEAR MADAM,—Through Birmingham and Oxford I got without any difficulty or disaster to London, though not in so short a time as I expected, for I did not reach Oxford before the second day. I came home very much incommoded by obstructed respiration; but by vigorous methods am something better. I have since been at Brighthelmstone, and am now designing to settle.

"Different things, madam, are fit for different people. It is fit for me to settle, and for you to move. I wish I could hear of you at Bath; but I am afraid that is hardly to be expected from your resolute inactivity. My next hope is that you will endeavour to grow well where you are. I cannot help thinking that I saw a visible amendment between the time when I left you to go to Ashbourne, and the time when I came back. I hope you will go on mending and mending, to which exercise and cheerfulness will very much contribute. Take care, therefore, dearest madam, to be busy and cheerful.

"I have great confidence in the care and conversation of dear Mrs. Gastrell. It is very much the interest of all that know her that she should continue well, for she is one of few people that has the proper regard for those that are sick. She was so kind to me that I hope I never shall forget it, and if it be troublesome to you to write, I shall hope that she will do me another act of kindness by answering this letter, for I beg that I may hear from you by some hand or another. I am, madam, your most obedient servant, "SAM. JOHNSON."]

Pearson MSS.

["DR. JOHNSON TO MRS. LUCY PORTER.

"London, 20th Nov. 1777.

"DEAR LOVE,—You ordered me to write you word when I came home. I have been for some days at Brighthelmstone, and came back on Tuesday night.

"You know that when I left you I was not well; I have taken physick very diligently, and am perceptibly better; so

much better that I hope by care and perseverance to recover, and see you again from time to time. Pearson MS.

"Mr. Nollikens, the statuary, has had my direction to send you a cast of my head. I will pay the carriage when we meet. Let me know how you like it; and what the ladies of your rout say to it. I have heard different opinions. I cannot think where you can put it.

"I found every body here well. Miss [Thrale] has a mind to be womanly, and her womanhood does not sit well upon her.

"Please to make my compliments to all the ladies and all the gentlemen to whom I owe them, that is, to a great part of the town. I am, dear madam, your most humble servant,

"SAM. JOHNSON."]

"MR. BOSWELL TO DR. JOHNSON[1].

"Edinburgh, 29th Sept. 1777.

"MY DEAR SIR,—By the first post I inform you of my safe arrival at my own house, and that I had the comfort of finding my wife and children all in good health.

"When I look back upon our late interview, it appears to me to have answered expectation better than almost any scheme of happiness that I ever put in execution. My Journal is stored with wisdom and wit; and my memory is filled with the recollection of lively and affectionate feelings, which now, I think, yield me more satisfaction than at the time when they were first excited. I have experienced this upon other occasions. I shall be obliged to you if you will explain it to me; for it seems wonderful that pleasure should be more vivid at a distance than when near. I wish you may find yourself in a humour to do me this favour; but I flatter myself with no strong hope of it; for I have observed, that unless upon very serious occasions, your letters to me are not *answers* to those which I write."

(I then expressed much uneasiness that I had mentioned to him the name of the gentleman who had told me the story so much to his disadvantage, the truth of which he had completely refuted; for that my having done so might be interpreted as a breach of confidence, and offend one whose society I valued:

[1] [This letter is put a little out of its chronological place, to keep it near the answer.—ED.]

therefore earnestly requesting that no notice might be taken of it to any body, till I should be in London, and have an opportunity to talk it over with the gentleman.)

"TO JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

"London, 29th Nov. 1777.

"DEAR SIR,—You will wonder, or you have wondered, why no letter has come from me. What you wrote at your return had in it such a strain of cowardly caution as gave me no pleasure. I could not well do what you wished; I had no need to vex you with a refusal. I have seen Mr. ————, and as to him have set all right, without any inconvenience, so far as I know, to you. Mrs. Thrale had forgot the story. You may now be at ease.

"And at ease I certainly wish you, for the kindness that you showed in coming so long a journey to see me. It was pity to keep you so long in pain, but, upon reviewing the matter, I do not see what I could have done better than I did.

"I hope you found at your return my dear enemy and all her little people quite well, and had no reason to repent of your journey. I think on it with great gratitude.

"I was not well when you left me at the doctor's, and I grew worse; yet I staid on, and at Lichfield was very ill. Travelling, however, did not make me worse; and when I came to London, I complied with a summons to go to Brighthelmstone, where I saw Beauclerk, and staid three days.

"Our club has recommenced last Friday, but I was not there. Langton has another wench [1]. Mrs. Thrale is in hopes of a young brewer. They got by their trade last year a very large sum, and their expenses are proportionate.

"Mrs. Williams's health is very bad. And I have had for some time a very difficult and laborious respiration; but I am better by purges, abstinence, and other methods. I am yet, however, much behind-hand in my health and rest.

"Dr. Blair's sermons are now universally commended; but let him think that I had the honour of first finding and first praising his excellencies. I did not stay to add my voice to that of the publick.

"My dear friend, let me thank you once more for your visit: you did me great honour, and I hope met with nothing that

[1] A daughter born to him.—BOSWELL.

displeased you. I staid long at Ashbourne, not much pleased, yet awkward at departing. I then went to Lichfield, where I found my friend at Stowhill[1] very dangerously diseased. Such is life. Let us try to pass it well, whatever it be, for there is surely something beyond it.

"Well, now, I hope all is well; write as soon as you can to, dear sir, your affectionate servant, "SAM. JOHNSON."

"TO DR. SAMUEL JOHNSON.

"Edinburgh, 29th Nov. 1777.

"MY DEAR SIR,—This day's post has at length relieved me from much uneasiness, by bringing me a letter from you. I was, indeed, doubly uneasy; on my own account and yours. I was very anxious to be secured against any bad consequences from my imprudence in mentioning the gentleman's name who had told me a story to your disadvantage; and as I could hardly suppose it possible that you would delay so long to make me easy, unless you were ill, I was not a little apprehensive about you. You must not be offended when I venture to tell you that you appear to me to have been too rigid upon this occasion. The '*cowardly caution which gave you no pleasure,*' was suggested to me by a friend here, to whom I mentioned the strange story, and the detection of its falsity, as an instance how one may be deceived by what is apparently very good authority. But, as I am still persuaded, that as I might have obtained the truth without mentioning the gentleman's name, it was wrong in me to do it, I cannot see that you are just in blaming my caution. But if you were ever so just in your disapprobation, might you not have dealt more tenderly with me?

"I went to Auchinleck about the middle of October, and passed some time with my father very comfortably.

* * * * * *

"I am engaged in a criminal prosecution against a country schoolmaster, for indecent behaviour to his female scholars. There is no statute against such abominable conduct; but it is punishable at common law. I shall be obliged to you for your assistance in this extraordinary trial. I ever am, my dear sir, your faithful humble servant, "JAMES BOSWELL."

About this time I wrote to Johnson, giving him an account of the decision of the *negro cause*, by

[1] Mrs. Aston.—BOSWELL.

the court of session, which by those who hold even the mildest and best regulated slavery in abomination (of which number I do not hesitate to declare that I am none) should be remembered with high respect, and to the credit of Scotland; for it went upon a much broader ground than the case of *Somerset*, which was decided in England[1]; being truly the general question, whether a perpetual obligation of service to one master in any mode should be sanctified by the law of a free country. A negro, then called *Joseph Knight*, a native of Africa, having been brought to Jamaica in the usual course of the slave trade, and purchased by a Scotch gentleman in that island, had attended his master to Scotland, where it was officiously suggested to him that he would be found entitled to his liberty without any limitation. He accordingly brought his action, in the course of which the advocates on both sides did themselves great honour. Mr. Maclaurin has had the praise of Johnson, for his argument[2] in favour of the negro, and Mr. Macconochie[3] distinguished himself on the same side, by his ingenuity and extraordinary research. Mr. Cullen, on the part of the master, discovered good information and sound reasoning; in which he was well supported by Mr. James Ferguson, remarkable for a manly understanding, and a knowledge both of books and of the world. But I cannot too highly praise the speech which Mr. Henry Dundas generously contributed to the cause of the sooty

[1] See State Trials, vol. xi. p. 339, and Mr. Hargrave's argument.—BOSWELL.

[2] The motto to it was happily chosen:

"Quamvis ille niger, quamvis tu candidus esses."

I cannot avoid mentioning a circumstance no less strange than true, that a brother advocate in considerable practice [Mr. Wright], but of whom it certainly cannot be said, *Ingenuas didicit fideliter artes*, asked Mr. Maclaurin, with a face of flippant assurance, "Are these words your own?"—BOSWELL.

[3] [Afterwards a lord of session, by the title of Lord Meadowbank, and father of the present Lord Meadowbank.—ED.]

stranger. Mr. Dundas's Scottish accent, which has been so often in vain obtruded as an objection to his powerful abilities in parliament, was no disadvantage to him in his own country. And I do declare, that upon this memorable question he impressed me, and I believe all his audience, with such feelings as were produced by some of the most eminent orations of antiquity. This testimony I liberally give to the excellence of an old friend, with whom it has been my lot to differ very widely upon many political topicks: yet I persuade myself without malice. A great majority of the lords of session decided for the negro. But four of their number, the Lord President, Lord Elliock, Lord Monboddo, and Lord Covington, resolutely maintained the lawfulness of a *status*, which has been acknowledged in all ages and countries, and that when freedom flourished, as in old Greece and Rome.

["TO MRS. GASTRELL[1].

"Bolt-court, Fleet-street, 23d Dec. 1777. Pemb. MS.

"DEAR MADAM,—Your long silence portended no good; yet I hope the danger is not so near as our anxiety sometimes makes us fear. Winter is indeed to all those that any distemper has enfeebled a very troublesome time; but care and caution may pass safely through it, and from spring and summer some relief is always to be hoped. When I came hither I fell to taking care of myself, and by physick and opium had the constriction that obstructed my breath very suddenly removed. My nights still continue very laborious and tedious, but they do not grow worse.

"I do not ask you, dear madam, to take care of Mrs. Aston; I know how little you want any such exhortations; but I earnestly entreat her to take care of herself. Many lives are prolonged by a diligent attention to little things, and I am far from thinking it unlikely that she may grow better by degrees. However, it is her duty to try, and when we do our duty we have reason to hope. I am, dear madam, your most humble servant, "SAM. JOHNSON."]

[1] [See *ante*, v. iii. p. 358.—ED.]

"TO JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

"27th December, 1777.

"DEAR SIR,—This is the time of the year in which all express their good wishes to their friends, and I send mine to you and your family. May your lives be long, happy, and good. I have been much out of order, but, I hope, do not grow worse.

"The crime of the schoolmaster whom you are engaged to prosecute is very great, and may be suspected to be too common. In our law it would be a breach of the peace and a misdemeanour: that is, a kind of indefinite crime, not capital, but punishable at the discretion of the court. You cannot want matter: all that needs to be said will easily occur.

"Mr. Shaw, the authour of the Gaelick Grammar, desires me to make a request for him to Lord Eglintoune, that he may be appointed chaplain to one of the new-raised regiments.

"All our friends are as they were; little has happened to them of either good or bad. Mrs. Thrale ran a great black hair-dressing pin into her eye; but by great evacuation she kept it from inflaming, and it is almost well. Miss Reynolds has been out of order, but is better. Mrs. Williams is in a very poor state of health.

"If I should write on, I should, perhaps, write only complaints, and therefore I will content myself with telling you, that I love to think on you, and to hear from you; and that I am, dear sir, yours faithfully, "SAM. JOHNSON."

"TO DR. SAMUEL JOHNSON.

"Edinburgh, 8th Jan. 1778.

"DEAR SIR,—Your congratulations upon a new year are mixed with complaint: mine must be so too. My wife has for some time been ill, having been confined to the house these three months by a severe cold, attended with alarming symptoms."

(Here I gave a particular account of the distress which the person, upon every account most dear to me, suffered; and of the dismal state of apprehension in which I now was: adding that I never stood more in need of his consoling philosophy.)

"Did you ever look at a book written by Wilson, a Scotchman, under the Latin name of *Volusenus*, according to the custom of literary men at a certain period? It is entitled "*De Animi Tranquillitate.*" I earnestly desire tranquillity. *Bona res*

quies; but I fear I shall never attain it: for, when unoccupied, I grow gloomy, and occupation agitates me to feverishness.

* * * * * *

"I am, dear sir, your most affectionate humble servant,

"JAMES BOSWELL.

"TO JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

"24th January, 1778.

"DEAR SIR,—To a letter so interesting as your last, it is proper to return some answer, however little I may be disposed to write.

"Your alarm at your lady's illness was reasonable, and not disproportionate to the appearance of the disorder. I hope your physical friend's conjecture is now verified, and all fear of a consumption at an end: a little care and exercise will then restore her. London is a good air for ladies; and if you bring her hither, I will do for her what she did for me—I will retire from my apartments for her accommodation. Behave kindly to her, and keep her cheerful.

"You always seem to call for tenderness. Know then, that in the first month of the present year I very highly esteem and very cordially love you. I hope to tell you this at the beginning of every year as long as we live; and why should we trouble ourselves to tell or hear it oftener?

"Tell Veronica, Euphemia, and Alexander, that I wish them, as well as their parents, many happy years.

"You have ended the negro's cause much to my mind. Lord Auchinleck and dear Lord Hailes were on the side of liberty. Lord Hailes's name reproaches me; but if he saw my languid neglect of my own affairs, he would rather pity than resent my neglect of his. I hope to mend, *ut et mihi vivam et amicis*. I am, dear sir, yours affectionately,

"SAM. JOHNSON.

"My service to my fellow-traveller, Joseph."

Johnson maintained a long and intimate friendship with Mr. Welch, who succeeded the celebrated Henry Fielding as one of his majesty's justices of the peace for Westminster; kept a regular office for the police of that great district; and discharged his important trust, for many years, faithfully and ably. Johnson, who had an eager and unceasing curiosity

to know human life in all its variety, told me, that he attended Mr. Welch in his office for a whole winter, to hear the examinations of the culprits; but that he found an almost uniform tenor of misfortune, wretchedness, and profligacy. Mr. Welch's health being impaired, he was advised to try the effect of a warm climate; and Johnson, by his interest with Mr. Chamier, procured him leave of absence to go to Italy, and a promise that the pension or salary of two hundred pounds a year, which government allowed him, should not be discontinued. Mr. Welch accordingly went abroad, accompanied by his daughter Anne, a young lady of uncommon talents and literature.

"TO SAUNDERS WELCH, ESQ., AT THE ENGLISH COFFEE-HOUSE, ROME.

"3d February, 1778.

"DEAR SIR,—To have suffered one of my best and dearest friends to pass almost two years in foreign countries without a letter, has a very shameful appearance of inattention. But the truth is, that there was no particular time in which I had any thing particular to say; and general expressions of good will, I hope, our long friendship is grown too solid to want.

"Of public affairs you have information from the newspapers wherever you go, for the English keep no secret; and of other things Mrs. Nollekens informs you. My intelligence could, therefore, be of no use; and Miss Nancy's letters made it unnecessary to write to you for information; I was likewise for some time out of humour, to find that motion and nearer approaches to the sun did not restore your health so fast as I expected. Of your health the accounts have lately been more pleasing; and I have the gratification of imagining to myself a length of years which I hope you have gained, and of which the enjoyment will be improved by a vast accession of images and observations which your journeys and various residence have enabled you to make and accumulate. You have travelled with this felicity, almost peculiar to yourself, that your companion is not to part from you at your journey's end; but you are to live on together, to help each other's recollections, and to supply each other's omissions. The

world has few greater pleasures than that which two friends enjoy, in tracing back, at some distant time, those transactions and events through which they have passed together. One of the old man's miseries is, that he cannot easily find a companion able to partake with him of the past. You and your fellow-traveller have this comfort in store, that your conversation will be not easily exhausted; one will always be glad to say what the other will always be willing to hear.

"That you may enjoy this pleasure long, your health must have your constant attention. I suppose you propose to return this year. There is no need of haste: do not come hither before the height of summer, that you may fall gradually into the inconveniences of your native clime. July seems to be the proper month. August and September will prepare you for the winter. After having travelled so far to find health, you must take care not to lose it at home; and I hope a little care will effectually preserve it.

"Miss Nancy has doubtless kept a constant and copious journal. She must not expect to be welcome when she returns without a great mass of information. Let her review her journal often, and set down what she finds herself to have omitted, that she may trust to memory as little as possible, for memory is soon confused by a quick succession of things; and she will grow every day less confident of the truth of her own narratives, unless she can recur to some written memorials. If she has satisfied herself with hints, instead of full representations, let her supply the deficiencies now while her memory is yet fresh, and while her father's memory may help her. If she observes this direction, she will not have travelled in vain; for she will bring home a book with which she may entertain herself to the end of life. If it were not now too late, I would advise her to note the impression which the first sight of any thing new and wonderful made upon her mind. Let her now set her thoughts down as she can recollect them; for faint as they may already be, they will grow every day fainter.

"Perhaps I do not flatter myself unreasonably when I imagine that you may wish to know something of me. I can gratify your benevolence with no account of health. The hand of time, or of disease, is very heavy upon me. I pass restless and uneasy nights, harassed with convulsions of my breast, and flatulencies at my stomach; and restless nights make heavy days. But nothing will be mended by complaints, and therefore I will make an end. When we meet, we will try to forget our cares and our maladies, and contribute, as we can, to the

cheerfulness of each other. If I had gone with you, I believe I should have been better; but I do not know that it was in my power. I am, dear sir, your most humble servant,

"SAM. JOHNSON."

This letter, while it gives admirable advice how to travel to the best advantage, and will therefore be of very general use, is another eminent proof of Johnson's warm and affectionate heart [1].

Pearson MSS. ["DR. JOHNSON TO MRS. LUCY PORTER.

"19th February, 1778.

"DEAR MADAM,—I have several little things to mention which I have hitherto neglected.

"You judged rightly in thinking that the bust [2] would not please. It is condemned by Mrs. Thrale, Mrs. Reynolds, and Mrs. Garrick; so that your disapprobation is not singular.

"These things have never cost me any thing, so that I do not much know the price. My bust was made for the Exhibition, and shown for honour of the artist, who is a man of reputation above any of the other sculptors. To be modelled in clay costs, I believe, twenty guineas; but the casts, when the model is made, are of no great price; whether a guinea or two guineas, I cannot tell.

"When you complained for want of oysters, I ordered you a barrel weekly for a month; you sent me word sooner that you had enough, but I did not countermand the rest. If you could not eat them, could you not give them away? When you want any thing send me word.

"I am very poorly, and have very restless and oppressive nights, but always hope for better. Pray for me. I am your most humble servant, "SAM. JOHNSON."]

"TO DR. SAMUEL JOHNSON.

"Edinburgh, 26th February, 1778.

"MY DEAR SIR,—Why I have delayed, for near a month, to thank you for your last affectionate letter, I cannot say; for

[1] The friendship between Mr. Welch and him was unbroken. Mr. Welch died not many months before him, and bequeathed him five guineas for a ring, which Johnson received with tenderness, as a kind memorial. His regard was constant for his friend Mr. Welch's daughters; of whom Jane is married to Mr. Nollekens, the statuary, whose merit is too well known to require any praise from me.—BOSWELL. [See a great deal about Miss Anne in Miss Hawkins's *Memoirs*.—ED.]

[2] [This bust, and the walking-stick mentioned by Boswell, are now in the possession of Mrs. Pearson, of Hill Ridware, near Lichfield.—HARWOOD.]

my mind has been in better health these three weeks than for some years past. I believe I have evaded till I could send you a copy of Lord Hailes's opinion on the negro's cause, which he wishes you to read, and correct any errors that there may be in the language; for, says he, 'we live in a critical, though not a learned age; and I seek to screen myself under the shield of Ajax.' I communicated to him your apology for keeping the sheets of his 'Annals' so long. He says, 'I am sorry to see that Dr. Johnson is in a state of languor. Why should a sober Christian, neither an enthusiast nor a fanatick, be very merry or very sad?' I envy his lordship's comfortable constitution; but well do I know that languor and dejection will afflict the best, however excellent their principles. I am in possession of Lord Hailes's opinion in his own hand-writing, and have had it for some time. My excuse then for procrastination must be, that I wanted to have it copied; and I have now put that off so long, that it will be better to bring it with me than send it, as I shall probably get you to look at it sooner when I solicit you in person.

"My wife, who is, I thank God, a good deal better, is much obliged to you for your very polite and courteous offer of your apartment: but, if she goes to London, it will be best for her to have lodgings in the more airy vicinity of Hyde-park. I, however, doubt much if I shall be able to prevail with her to accompany me to the metropolis; for she is so different from you and me, that she dislikes travelling; and she is so anxious about her children, that she thinks she should be unhappy if at a distance from them. She therefore wishes rather to go to some country place in Scotland, where she can have them with her.

"I purpose being in London about the 20th of next month, as I think it creditable to appear in the house of lords as one of Douglas's counsel, in the great and last competition between Duke Hamilton and him.

* * * * * *

"I am sorry poor Mrs. Williams is so ill: though her temper is unpleasant, she has always been polite and obliging to me. I wish many happy years to good Mr. Levett, who, I suppose, holds his usual place at your breakfast-table[1]. I ever am, my dear sir, your affectionate humble servant,

"JAMES BOSWELL."

[1] Dr. Percy, the Bishop of Dromore, humorously observed, that Levett used to breakfast on the crust of a roll, which Johnson, after tearing out the crum

"TO DR. SAMUEL JOHNSON.

"Edinburgh, 28th Feb. 1778.

"MY DEAR SIR,—You are at present busy amongst the English poets, preparing, for the public instruction and entertainment, prefaces biographical and critical. It will not, therefore, be out of season to appeal to you for the decision of a controversy which has arisen between a lady and me concerning a passage in Parnell. That poet tells us, that his hermit quitted his cell

> '——— to know the world by sight,
> To find if *books* or *swains* report it right;
> (For yet by *swains alone* the world he knew,
> Whose feet came wand'ring o'er the nightly dew).'

I maintain, that there is an inconsistency here; for as the hermit's notions of the world were formed from the reports both of *books* and *swains*, he could not justly be said to know by *swains alone*. Be pleased to judge between us, and let us have your reasons [1].

"What do you say to 'Taxation no Tyranny,' now, after Lord North's declaration, or confession, or whatever else his conciliatory speech should be called? I never differed from you in politicks but upon two points,—the Middlesex election, and the taxation of the Americans by the British houses of representatives. There is a *charm* in the word *parliament*, so I avoid it. As I am a steady and a warm tory, I regret that the king does not see it to be better for him to receive constitutional supplies from his American subjects by the voice of their own assemblies, where his royal person is represented, than through the medium of his British subjects. I am persuaded that the power of the crown, which I wish to increase, would be greater when in contact with all its dominions, than if 'the rays of regal bounty [2]' were 'to shine' upon America through that

for himself, *threw* to his humble friend.—BOSWELL. Perhaps the word *threw* is here too strong. Dr. Johnson never treated Levett with contempt; it is clear indeed, from various circumstances, that he had great kindness for him. I have often seen Johnson at breakfast, accompanied, or rather attended, by Levett, who had always the management of the tea-kettle.—MALONE. [Sir J. Hawkins states, that "Dr. Johnson frequently observed that Levett was indebted to him for nothing more than house-room, his share in a penny loaf at breakfast, and now and then a dinner on a Sunday."—ED.]

[1] See this subject discussed in a subsequent page, under May 3, 1779.—MALONE.

[2] Alluding to a line in his "Vanity of Human Wishes," describing Cardinal Wolsey in a state of elevation:

"Through him the rays of regal bounty shine."—BOSWELL.

dense and troubled body, a modern British parliament. But, enough of this subject; for your angry voice at Ashbourne upon it still sounds awful 'in my mind's *ears*.'—I ever am, my dear sir, your most affectionate humble servant,

"JAMES BOSWELL."

["DR. JOHNSON TO MRS. MONTAGU. Mont. MS.

"5th March, 1778.

"MADAM,—And so you are alarmed, naughty lady? You might know that I was ill enough when Mr. Thrale brought you my excuse. Could you think that I missed the honour of being at (your) table for any slight reason? But you (have) too many to miss any one of us, and I am (proud) to be remembered at last.

"I am much better. A little cough (still) remains which will not confine me. To houses (like yours) of great delicacy I am not willing to bring it.

"Now, dear madam, we must talk of business. Poor Davies, the bankrupt bookseller, is soliciting his friends to collect a small sum for the repurchase of part of his household stuff. Several of them gave him five guineas. It would be an honour to him to owe part of his relief to Mrs. Montagu.

"Let me thank you, madam, once more for your inquiry; you have, perhaps, among your numerous train not one that values a kind word or a kind look more than, madam, your most humble servant, "SAM. JOHNSON."

"DR. JOHNSON TO MRS. MONTAGU.

"6th March, 1778.

"MADAM,—I hope Davies[1], who does not want wit, does not want gratitude, and then he will be almost as thankful for the bill as I am for the letter that enclosed it.

"If I do not lose, what I hope always to keep, my reverence for transcendent merit, I shall continue to be, with unalterable fidelity, madam, your most obliged, and most humble servant,

"SAM. JOHNSON."]

"TO DR. SAMUEL JOHNSON.

"Edinburgh, 12th March, 1778.

"MY DEAR SIR,—The alarm of your late illness distressed me but a few hours; for on the evening of the day that it reached

[1] [Tom Davies, the bookseller, in whose behalf he more than once appealed to the charity of Mrs. Montagu.—ED.]

me, I found it contradicted in 'The London Chronicle,' which I could depend upon as authentick concerning you, Mr. Strahan being the printer of it. I did not see the paper in which 'the approaching extinction of a bright luminary' was announced. Sir William Forbes told me of it; and he says he saw me so uneasy, that he did not give me the report in such strong terms as he read it. He afterwards sent me a letter from Mr. Langton to him, which relieved me much. I am, however, not quite easy, as I have not heard from you; and now I shall not have that comfort before I see you, for I set out for London to-morrow before the post comes in. I hope to be with you on Wednesday morning: and I ever am, with the highest veneration, my dear sir, your most obliged, faithful, and affectionate humble servant, "JAMES BOSWELL."

On Wednesday, March 18, I arrived in London, and was informed by good Mr. Francis, that his master was better, and was gone to Mr. Thrale's at Streatham, to which place I wrote to him, begging to know when he would be in town. He was not expected for some time; but next day, having called on Dr. Taylor, in Dean's-yard, Westminster, I found him there, and was told he had come to town for a few hours. He met me with his usual kindness, but instantly returned to the writing of something on which he was employed when I came in, and on which he seemed much intent. Finding him thus engaged, I made my visit very short, and had no more of his conversation, except his expressing a serious regret that a friend of ours [1] was living at too much expense, considering how poor an appearance he made: "If," said he, "a man has splendour from his expense, if he spends his money in pride or in pleasure, he has value; but if he lets others spend it for him, which is most commonly the case, he has no advantage from it."

On Friday, March 20, I found him at his own

[1] [Mr. Langton.—ED.]

house, sitting with Mrs. Williams, and was informed that the room formerly allotted to me was now appropriated to a charitable purpose; Mrs. Desmoulins[1], and, I think, her daughter, and a Miss Carmichael, being all lodged in it. Such was his humanity, and such his generosity, that Mrs. Desmoulins herself told me he allowed her half a guinea a week. Let it be remembered, that this was above a twelfth part of his pension.

His liberality, indeed, was at all periods of his life very remarkable. Mr. Howard, of Lichfield, at whose father's house Johnson had in his early years been kindly received, told me, that when he was a boy at the Charter-house, his father wrote to him to go and pay a visit to Mr. Samuel Johnson, which he accordingly did, and found him in an upper room, of poor appearance. Johnson received him with much courteousness, and talked a great deal to him, as to a schoolboy, of the course of his education, and other particulars. When he afterwards came to know and understand the high character of this great man, he recollected his condescension with wonder. He added, that when he was going away, Mr. Johnson presented him with half a guinea; and this, said Mr. Howard, was at a time when he probably had not another.

[Johnson's patience was as much tried by these inmates as his generosity. The dissensions that the many odd[2] inhabitants of his house chose to

Ed. Piozzi, p. 164.

[1] Daughter of Dr. Swinfen, Johnson's godfather, and widow of Mr. Desmoulins, a writing-master.—Boswell.

[2] [In Malone's MS. notes, he, on more than one occasion, reprobates "the misrepresentations," as he calls them, "of this mendacious lady," on the subject of Johnson's inmates and pensioners; and he particularly notices this passage, from which, he says, "it might be inferred that he had *twenty* in his house, whereas Mrs. Williams, Mrs. Desmoulins occasionally, and Levett, with his two servants, composed the whole." This is the style in which Malone and Boswell usually treated Mrs. Piozzi; and, as generally happens, she is right,

Piozzi, p. 164,5.

live in distressed and mortified him exceedingly. He really was sometimes afraid of going home, because he was so sure to be met at the door with numberless complaints; and he used to lament pathetically to Mrs. Thrale, and to Mr. Sastres, the Italian master, who was much his favourite, that they made his life miserable from the impossibility he found of making theirs happy, when every favour he bestowed on one was wormwood to the rest. If, however, Mrs. Thrale ventured to blame their ingratitude, and condemn their conduct, he would instantly set about softening the one and justifying the other; and finished commonly by telling her, that she knew not how to make allowances for situations she never experienced.]

We retired from Mrs. Williams to another room. Tom Davies soon after joined us. He had now unfortunately failed in his circumstances, and was much indebted to Dr. Johnson's kindness for obtaining for him many alleviations of his distress. After he went away, Johnson blamed his folly in quitting the stage, by which he and his wife got five hundred pounds a year. I said, I believed it was owing to Churchill's attack upon him,

"He mouths a sentence as curs mouth a bone."

JOHNSON. "I believe so too, sir. But what a man is he who is to be driven from the stage by a line? Another line would have driven him from his shop!"

I told him that I was engaged as counsel at the bar of the house of commons to oppose a road-bill in the

or, at least, justifiable in what she says. Surely, in this particular case, when we find that, besides Dr. Johnson, his house contained Mr. Levett, Mrs. Williams, Miss Carmichael, Mrs. Desmoulins, Miss Desmoulins, a negro, and a female servant, Mrs. Piozzi was justified in talking of his "*many* inmates."—ED.]

county of Stirling, and asked him what mode he would advise me to follow in addressing such an audience. JOHNSON. "Why, sir, you must provide yourself with a good deal of extraneous matter, which you are to produce occasionally, so as to fill up the time; for you must consider, that they do not listen much. If you begin with the strength of your cause, it may be lost before they begin to listen. When you catch a moment of attention, press the merits of the question upon them." He said, as to one point of the merits, that he thought "it would be a wrong thing to deprive the small landholders of the privilege of assessing themselves for making and repairing the high roads; *it was destroying a certain portion of liberty without a good reason, which was always a bad thing.*" When I mentioned this observation next day to Mr. Wilkes, he pleasantly said, "What! does *he* talk of liberty? *Liberty* is as ridiculous in *his* mouth as *religion* in *mine.*" Mr. Wilkes's advice as to the best mode of speaking at the bar of the house of commons was not more respectful towards the senate than that of Dr. Johnson. "Be as impudent as you can, as merry as you can, and say whatever comes uppermost. Jack Lee[1] is the best heard there of any counsel; and he is the most impudent dog, and always abusing us."

In my interview with Dr. Johnson this evening, I was quite easy, quite as his companion; upon which I find in my journal the following reflection: "So ready is my mind to suggest matter for dissatisfaction, that I felt a sort of regret that I was so easy.

[1] [Mr. Lee, afterwards solicitor-general in the Rockingham administration. "He was a man of strong parts, though of coarse manners, and who never hesitated to express in the coarsest language whatever he thought."—*Wraxall's Mem.* vol. ii. p. 237. He was particularly distinguished by the violence of his invective against the person and administration of Lord Shelburne in 1782.—Ed.]

I missed that awful reverence with which I used to contemplate MR. SAMUEL JOHNSON, in the complex magnitude of his literary, moral, and religious character. I have a wonderful superstitious love of *mystery;* when, perhaps, the truth is, that it is owing to the cloudy darkness of my own mind. I should be glad that I am more advanced in my progress of being, so that I can view Dr. Johnson with a steadier and clearer eye. My dissatisfaction to-night was foolish. Would it not be foolish to regret that we shall have less mystery in a future state? That 'we now see in a glass darkly,' but shall 'then see face to face[1]?'" This reflection, which I thus freely communicate, will be valued by the thinking part of my readers, who may have themselves experienced a similar state of mind.

He returned next day to Streatham, to Mr. Thrale's; where, as Mr. Strahan once complained to me, "he was in a great measure absorbed from the society of his old friends." I was kept in London by business, and wrote to him on the 27th, that "a separation from him for a week, when we were so near, was equal to a separation for a year, when we were at four hundred miles distance." I went to Streatham on Monday, March 30. Before he appeared, Mrs. Thrale made a very characteristical remark: "I do not know for certain what will please Dr. Johnson: but I know for certain that it will displease him to praise any thing, even what he likes, extravagantly."

At dinner he laughed at querulous declamations against the age, on account of luxury,—increase of London,—scarcity of provisions,—and other such topicks. "Houses," said he, "will be built till rents

[1] [1 Cor. c. xiii. v. 12.—ED.]

fall; and corn is more plentiful now than ever it was."

I had before dinner repeated a ridiculous story told me by an old man, who had been a passenger with me in the stage-coach to-day. Mrs. Thrale, having taken occasion to allude to it in talking to me, called it "The story told you by the old *woman*." "Now, madam," said I, "give me leave to catch you in the fact: it was not an old *woman*, but an old *man*, whom I mentioned as having told me this." I presumed to take an opportunity, in the presence of Johnson, of showing this lively lady [1] how ready she was, unintentionally, to deviate from exact authenticity of narration.

Thomas à Kempis (he observed) must be a good book, as the world has opened its arms to receive it. It is said to have been printed, in one language or other, as many times as there have been months since it first came out [2]. I always was struck with this sentence in it: "Be not angry that you cannot make others as you wish them to be, since you cannot make yourself as you wish to be [3]."

He said, "I was angry with Hurd about Cowley for having published a selection of his works: but, upon better consideration, I think there is no impropriety in a man's publishing as much as he chooses of any authour, if he does not put the rest out of the way. A man, for instance, may print the Odes of

[1] [If mistakes like this were all that Mr. Boswell could impute to Mrs. Thrale, he had better have spared his censures. The inaccuracy was evidently trifling; probably had no effect on the story, and might be involuntary, as Mrs. Thrale might not have distinctly heard whether Boswell had said *old man* or *old woman*. The editor notices these trifles to show the *animus*, the spirit in which Mr. Boswell is prone to distort Mrs. Thrale's character.—ED.]

[2] The first edition was in 1492. Between that period and 1792, according to this account, there were three thousand six hundred editions. But this is very improbable.—MALONE.

[3] The original passage is: Si non potes te talem facere, qualem vis, quomodo poteris alium ad tuum habere beneplacitum? De Imit. Christ. lib. i. cap. xvii. —J. BOSWELL.

Horace alone." He seemed to be in a more indulgent humour than when this subject was discussed between him and Mr. Murphy[1].

When we were at tea and coffee, there came in Lord Trimlestown, in whose family was an ancient Irish peerage, but it suffered by taking the generous side in the troubles of the last century[2]. He was a man of pleasing conversation, and was accompanied by a young gentleman, his son.

I mentioned that I had in my possession the Life of Sir Robert Sibbald, the celebrated Scottish antiquary, and founder of the royal college of physicians at Edinburgh, in the original manuscript in his own hand writing; and that it was, I believed, the most natural and candid account of himself that ever was given by any man. As an instance, he tells that the Duke of Perth, then chancellor of Scotland, pressed him very much to come over to the Roman Catholick faith: that he resisted all his grace's arguments for a considerable time, till one day he felt himself, as it were, instantaneously convinced, and with tears in his eyes ran into the duke's arms, and embraced the ancient religion; that he continued very steady in it for some time, and accompanied his grace to London one winter, and lived in his household; that there he found the rigid fasting prescribed by the church very severe upon him; that this disposed him to reconsider the controversy; and having then seen that

[1] [See *ante*, vol. iii. p. 395.—Ed.]

[2] Since this was written, the attainder has been reversed; and Nicholas Barnewall is now a peer of Ireland with this title. The person mentioned in the text had studied physick, and prescribed *gratis* to the poor. Hence arose the subsequent conversation.—Malone. [We find in one of the magazines of the day, with the ironical title of "Remarkable Instance of Filial Affection," an advertisement dated 19th July, 1768, and signed "Thomas Barnewell," warning the public not to buy any timber trees which his father, Lord Trimlestown, is about to sell, as he is advised that *his father* is tenant for life, and has no right to sell such trees, and that the advertiser is resolved to put the *law in force* against any one who shall make a bargain contrary to his interest.—*Repertory*, vol. i. p. 118. Johnson's visitor must have been the *dutiful* son.—Ed.]

he was in the wrong, he returned to Protestantism. I talked of some time or other publishing this curious life. MRS. THRALE. "I think you had as well let alone that publication. To discover such weakness exposes a man when he is gone." JOHNSON. "Nay, it is an honest picture of human nature. How often are the primary motives of our greatest actions as small as Sibbald's for his reconversion!" MRS. THRALE. "But may they not as well be forgotten?" JOHNSON. "No, madam; a man loves to review his own mind. That is the use of a diary or journal." LORD TRIMLESTOWN. "True, sir. As the ladies love to see themselves in a glass, so a man likes to see himself in his journal." BOSWELL. "A very pretty allusion." JOHNSON. "Yes, indeed." BOSWELL. "And as a lady adjusts[1] her dress before a mirrour, a man adjusts his character by looking at his journal." I next year found the very same thought in Atterbury's "Funeral Sermon on Lady Cutts;" where, having mentioned her Diary, he says, "In this glass she every day dressed her mind." This is a proof of coincidence, and not of plagiarism; for I had never read that sermon before.

Next morning, while we were at breakfast, Johnson gave a very earnest recommendation of what he himself practised with the utmost conscientiousness: I mean a strict attention to truth[2], even in the most minute particulars. "Accustom your children," said

[1] [Boswell seems much pleased with his own ingenuity, and the coincidence of thoughts between Bishop Atterbury and himself; but I don't quite understand *his* expression "a man adjusting his character." If he means that a man, by referring to his journal, as a lady to her looking-glass, improves his mind and conduct daily, I suspect there is more of fancy than truth in it. Men may consult their diaries and read their conduct in the day that is gone by; but, generally, to as little advantage as the person figured by St. James in a similar strain:—"He beholds his natural face in a glass; he beholdeth himself and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was."—Chap. i. v. 23.—HALL.]

[2] [See *ante*, v. iii. p. 321.—ED.]

he, "constantly to this: if a thing happened at one window, and they, when relating it, say that it happened at another, do not let it pass, but instantly check them: you do not know where deviation from truth will end." BOSWELL. "It may come to the door: and when once an account is at all varied in one circumstance, it may by degrees be varied so as to be totally different from what really happened." Our lively hostess, whose fancy was impatient of the rein, fidgeted at this, and ventured to say, "Nay, this is too much. If Dr. Johnson should forbid me to drink tea, I would comply, as I should feel the restraint only twice a day; but little variations in narrative must happen a thousand times a day, if one is not perpetually watching." JOHNSON. "Well, madam, and you *ought* to be perpetually watching. It is more from carelessness about truth, than from intentional lying, that there is so much falsehood in the world."

In his review of Dr. Warton's "Essay on the Writings and Genius of Pope," Johnson has given the following salutary caution upon this subject: "Nothing but experience could evince the frequency of false information, or enable any man to conceive that so many groundless reports should be propagated as every man of eminence may hear of himself. Some men relate what they think as what they know; some men of confused memories and habitual inaccuracy ascribe to one man what belongs to another; and some talk on without thought or care. A few men are sufficient to broach falsehoods, which are afterwards innocently diffused by successive relaters[1]." Had he lived to read what Sir John Hawkins and

[1] Literary Magazine, 1756, p. 37.—BOSWELL.

Mrs. Piozzi have related concerning himself, how much would he have found his observation illustrated[1]! He was indeed so much impressed with the prevalence of falsehood, voluntary or unintentional, that I never knew any person who, upon hearing an extraordinary circumstance told, discovered more of the *incredulus odi*. He would say with a significant look and decisive tone, "It is not so. Do not tell this again[2]." He inculcated upon all his friends the importance of perpetual vigilance against the slightest degrees of falsehood; the effect of which, as Sir Joshua Reynolds observed to me, has been, that all who were of his *school* are distinguished for a love of truth and accuracy, which they would not have possessed in the same degree if they had not been acquainted with Johnson.

Talking of ghosts, he said, "It is wonderful that five thousand years have now elapsed since the creation of the world, and still it is undecided whether or not there has ever been an instance of the spirit of any person appearing after death. All argument is against it; but all belief is for it."

He said, "John Wesley's conversation is good, but he is never at leisure. He is always obliged to go at a certain hour. This is very disagreeable to a man who loves to fold his legs and have out his talk, as I do."

[1] [Sir John Hawkins has not, it is believed, stated any thing *false*, though he may have sometimes discoloured and misrepresented; and after all that Mr. Boswell and Mr. Malone have said of Mrs. Piozzi, nothing is proved—indeed nothing is asserted—(and the assertions are often disproved)—but *verbal inaccuracies*, such as saying "*old woman*" for "*old man*," and so forth. A majority of Mrs. Piozzi's anecdotes are confirmed by Mr. Boswell's own account. —Ed.]

[2] The following plausible but over-prudent counsel on this subject is given by an Italian writer, quoted by "*Rhedi de generatione insectarum*," with the epithet of "*divini poetæ*."

> 'Sempre à quel ver ch' a faccia di menzogna
> Dee l'uom chiudere le labbra quanto ei puote;
> Peròchè senza colpa fa vergogna."—Boswell.

On Friday, April 3, I dined with him in London, in a company [1] where were present several eminent men, whom I shall not name, but distinguish their parts in the conversation by different letters.

F. "I have been looking at this famous antique marble dog of Mr. Jennings, valued at a thousand guineas, said to be Alcibiades's dog." JOHNSON. "His tail then must be docked. That was the mark of Alcibiades's dog." E. "A thousand guineas! The representation of no animal whatever is worth so much. At this rate, a dead dog would indeed be better than a living lion." JOHNSON. "Sir, it is not the worth of the thing, but of the skill in forming it, which is so highly estimated. Every thing that enlarges the sphere of human powers, that shows man he can do what he thought he could not do, is valuable. The first man who balanced a straw upon his nose; Johnson [2], who rode upon three horses at a

[1] [THE CLUB.—This seems to be the only instance in which Mr. Boswell has ventured to give in any detail the conversation of that society; and we see that on this occasion he has not mentioned the *names*, but has disguised the parties under what look like *initials*. All these letters, however—even with the names of the company before us—it is not easy to appropriate. It appears by the books of the Club, as Mr. Hatchett informs the editor, that the company on that evening consisted of Dr. Johnson, president, Mr. Burke, Mr. Boswell, Dr. George Fordyce, Mr. Gibbon, Dr. Johnson (*again named*), Sir Joshua Reynolds, Lord Upper Ossory, and Mr. R. B. Sheridan. In Mr. Boswell's account, the initial E. no doubt stands for *Edmund* Burke; F., in allusion to his family name of *Fitzpatrick*, probably means Lord Upper Ossory; but the appropriation of the other letters is very difficult. The editor suspects, from some circumstances of the conversation, and from the double entry of Johnson's name, that, although it was his night to be *president*, he was not actually in the chair—perhaps from having come too late. If this suspicion be correct, the initial P. would mean *President;* but it would be still in doubt who the president was. J. probably meant Sir *Joshua* Reynolds, and R. might be *Richard* B. Sheridan; for though some of the observations made by R. are not very like Mr. Sheridan's style, it must be recollected that he was at this period a very young man, and not yet in parliament. The medical observations, and the allusions to Holland, made by C., suggest that Dr. Fordyce, a physician who was educated in Holland, was meant, although the editor cannot surmise why he should have been designated by the letter C. If these conjectures be just, it would follow that P., the *President*, was Mr. Gibbon. Why Mr. Boswell did not adopt one uniform mode of designating his interlocutors, and why he has involved a simple matter in so much mystery, is unaccountable. The editor offers his explanation of the four last names merely as a conjecture, with which he himself is not entirely satisfied. Sir James Mackintosh and Mr. Chalmers are equally dubious.—ED.]

[2] [See *ante*, v. i. p 408.—ED.]

time; in short, all such men deserve the applause of mankind, not on account of the use of what they did, but of the dexterity which they exhibited." BOSWELL. "Yet a misapplication of time and assiduity is not to be encouraged. Addison, in one of his 'Spectators,' commends the judgment of a king, who, as a suitable reward to a man that by long perseverance had attained to the art of throwing a barley-corn through the eye of a needle, gave him a bushel of barley." JOHNSON. "He must have been a king of Scotland, where barley is scarce." F. "One of the most remarkable antique figures of an animal is the boar at Florence." JOHNSON. "The first boar that is well made in marble should be preserved as a wonder. When men arrive at a facility of making boars well, then the workmanship is not of such value; but they should however be preserved as examples, and as a greater security for the restoration of the art, should it be lost."

E. "We hear prodigious complaints at present of emigration. I am convinced that emigration makes a country more populous." J. "That sounds very much like a paradox." E. "Exportation of men, like exportation of all other commodities, makes more be produced." JOHNSON. "But there would be more people were there not emigration, provided there were food for more." E. "No; leave a few breeders, and you'll have more people than if there were no emigration." JOHNSON. "Nay, sir, it is plain there will be more people, if there are more breeders. Thirty cows in good pasture will produce more calves than ten cows, provided they have good bulls. E. "There are bulls[1] enough in Ireland." JOHNSON

[1] [All this, as Mr. Boswell elsewhere says, must be a very imperfect record of the conversation. Mr. Burke no doubt meant to allude (perhaps with a *double meaning*) to the superabundant population of Ireland.—ED.]

(smiling). "So, sir, I should think from your argument." BOSWELL. "You said exportation of men, like exportation of other commodities, makes more be produced. But a bounty is given to encourage the exportation of corn, and no bounty is given for the exportation of men; though, indeed, those who go gain by it." R. "But the bounty on the exportation of corn is paid at home." E. "That's the same thing." JOHNSON. "No, sir." R. "A man who stays at home gains nothing by his neighbour's emigrating." BOSWELL. "I can understand that emigration may be the cause that more people may be produced in a country; but the country will not therefore be the more populous; for the people issue from it. It can only be said that there is a flow of people. It is an encouragement to have children, to know that they can get a living by emigration." R. "Yes, if there were an emigration of children under six years of age. But they don't emigrate till they could earn their livelihood in some way at home." C. "It is remarkable that the most unhealthy countries, where there are the most destructive diseases, such as Egypt and Bengal, are the most populous." JOHNSON. "Countries which are the most populous have the most destructive diseases. *That* is the true state of the proposition." C. "Holland is very unhealthy, yet it is exceedingly populous." JOHNSON. "I know not that Holland is unhealthy. But its populousness is owing to an influx of people from all other countries. Disease cannot be the cause of populousness; for it not only carries off a great proportion of the people; but those who are left are weakened, and unfit for the purposes of increase."

R. "Mr. E. I don't mean to flatter, but when posterity reads one of your speeches in parliament, it will be difficult to believe that you took so much

pains, knowing with certainty that it could produce no effect, that not one vote would be gained by it." E. "Waving your compliment to me, I shall say, in general, that it is very well worth while for a man to take pains to speak well in parliament. A man, who has vanity, speaks to display his talents; and if a man speaks well, he gradually establishes a certain reputation and consequence in the general opinion, which sooner or later will have its political reward. Besides, though not one vote is gained, a good speech has its effect. Though an act which has been ably opposed passes into a law, yet in its progress it is modelled, it is softened in such a manner, that we see plainly the minister has been told, that the members attached to him are so sensible of its injustice or absurdity from what they have heard, that it must be altered." JOHNSON. "And, sir, there is a gratification of pride. Though we cannot out-vote them, we will out-argue them. They shall not do wrong without its being shown both to themselves and to the world." E. "The house of commons is a mixed body. (I except the minority, which I hold to be pure (smiling), but I take the whole house.) It is a mass by no means pure; but neither is it wholly corrupt, though there is a large proportion of corruption in it. There are many members who generally go with the minister, who will not go all lengths. There are many honest well-meaning country gentlemen who are in parliament only to keep up the consequence of their families. Upon most of these a good speech will have influence." JOHNSON. "We are all more or less governed by interest. But interest will not make us do every thing. In a case which admits of doubt, we try to think on the side which is for our interest, and generally bring ourselves to act accordingly. But the subject must ad-

mit of diversity of colouring; it must receive a colour on that side. In the house of commons there are members enough who will not vote what is grossly unjust or absurd. No, sir; there must always be right enough, or appearance of right, to keep wrong in countenance." BOSWELL. "There is surely always a majority in parliament who have places, or who want to have them, and who therefore will be generally ready to support government without requiring any pretext." E. "True, sir; that majority will always follow

'Quo clamor vocat et turba faventium.'"

BOSWELL. "Well now, let us take the common phrase, Place-hunters. I thought they had hunted without regard to any thing, just as their huntsman, the minister, leads, looking only to the prey[1]." J. "But taking your metaphor, you know that in hunting there are few so desperately keen as to follow without reserve. Some do not choose to leap ditches and hedges and risk their necks, or gallop over steeps, or even to dirty themselves in bogs and mire." BOSWELL. "I am glad there are some good, quiet, moderate, political hunters." E. "I believe in any body of men in England I should have been in the minority! I have always been in the minority." P. "The house of commons resembles a private company. How seldom is any man convinced by another's argument; passion and pride rise against it." R. "What would be the consequence, if a minister, sure of a majority in the house of commons, should resolve

[1] Lord Bolingbroke, who, however detestable as a metaphysician, must be allowed to have had admirable talents as a political writer, thus describes the house of commons in his "Letter to Sir William Wyndham;"—"You know the nature of that assembly: they grow, like hounds, fond of the man who shows them game, and by whose halloo they are used to be encouraged."—BOSWELL.

that there should be no speaking at all upon his side?" E. "He must soon go out. That has been tried; but it was found it would not do."——

E. "The Irish language is not primitive; it is Teutonick, a mixture of the northern tongues; it has much English in it." JOHNSON. "It may have been radically Teutonick; but English and High Dutch have no similarity to the eye, though radically the same. Once, when looking into Low Dutch, I found, in a whole page, only one word similar to English; *stroem*, like *stream*, and it signified *tide*[1]." E. "I remember having seen a Dutch sonnet, in which I found this word, *roesnopies*. Nobody would at first think that this could be English; but, when we inquire, we find *roes*, rose, and *nopie*, knob; so we have *rosebuds*."

JOHNSON. "I have been reading Thicknesse's Travels, which I think are entertaining." BOSWELL. "What, sir, a good book?" JOHNSON. "Yes, sir, to read once. I do not say you are to make a study of it, and digest it; and I believe it to be a true book in his intention. All travellers generally mean to tell truth; though Thicknesse observes, upon Smollett's account of his alarming a whole town in France by firing a blunderbuss, and frightening a French nobleman till he made him tie on his portmanteau, that he would be loth to say Smollett had told two lies in one page; but he had found the only

[1] [Dr. Johnson seems to have been in error in this point. *Stroem* signifies just what *stream* does in English—*current*, flowing water, and thence *tide*: and the languages have undoubtedly a general similarity. Let us take as examples the explanations given in Marin's Dutch Dictionary, of the very two words to which Johnson alluded, with the English subjoined:

CURRENT.—*Stroom—ras*
stream—race.

TIDE.—*Water—ty—stroom—ebbe en vloet vander see*
water—tide—stream—ebb and flow of the sea.

And under the word *current* is quoted a Dutch phrase which is almost English;
Dat boek word tien croonen
that book worth ten crowns.—ED.]

town in France where these things could have happened. Travellers must often be mistaken. In every thing, except where mensuration can be applied, they may honestly differ. There has been, of late, a strange turn in travellers to be displeased."

E. "From the experience which I have had,—and I have had a great deal,—I have learnt to think *better* of mankind." JOHNSON. "From my experience I have found them worse in commercial dealings, more disposed to cheat than I had any notion of; but more disposed to do one another good than I had conceived." J. "Less just and more beneficent." JOHNSON. "And really it is wonderful, considering how much attention is necessary for men to take care of themselves, and ward off immediate evils which press upon them, it is wonderful how much they do for others. As it is said of the greatest liar, that he tells more truth than falsehood; so it may be said of the worst man, that he does more good than evil." BOSWELL. "Perhaps from experience men may be found *happier* than we suppose." JOHNSON. "No, sir; the more we inquire we shall find men the less happy." P. "As to thinking better or worse of mankind from experience, some cunning people will not be satisfied unless they have put men to the test, as they think. There is a very good story told of Sir Godfrey Kneller, in his character of a justice of the peace. A gentleman brought his servant before him, upon an accusation of having stolen some money from him; but it having come out that he had laid it purposely in the servant's way, in order to try his honesty, Sir Godfrey sent the master to prison [1]."

[1] Pope thus introduces this story:

"Faith, in such case if you should prosecute,
I think Sir Godfrey should decide the suit,
Who sent the thief who stole the cash away,
And punish'd him that put it in his way."

Imitations of Horace, book II. epist. ii.—BOSWELL.

JOHNSON. "To resist temptation once is not a sufficient proof of honesty. If a servant, indeed, were to resist the continued temptation of silver lying in a window, as some people let it lie, when he is sure his master does not know how much there is of it, he would give a strong proof of honesty. But this is a proof to which you have no right to put a man. You know, humanly speaking, there is a certain degree of temptation which will overcome any virtue. Now, in so far as you approach temptation to a man, you do him an injury; and, if he is overcome, you share his guilt." P. "And, when once overcome, it is easier for him to be got the better of again." BOSWELL. "Yes, you are his seducer; you have debauched him. I have known a man resolved to put friendship to the test, by asking a friend to lend him money, merely with that view, when he did not want it." JOHNSON. "That is very wrong, sir. Your friend may be a narrow man, and yet have many good qualities: narrowness may be his only fault. Now you are trying his general character as a friend by one particular singly, in which he happens to be defective, when, in truth, his character is composed of many particulars."

E. "I understand the hogshead of claret, which this society was favoured with by our friend the dean [1], is nearly out; I think he should be written to, to send another of the same kind. Let the request be made with a happy ambiguity of expression, so that we may have the chance of his sending it also as a present." JOHNSON. "I am willing to offer my services as secretary on this occasion." P. "As many as are for Dr. Johnson being secretary

[1] [Dr. Barnard, Dean of Derry, afterwards Bishop of Killaloe and Limerick. —ED.]

hold up your hands[1].—Carried unanimously." BOSWELL. "He will be our dictator." JOHNSON. "No, the company is to dictate to me. I am only to write for wine; and I am quite disinterested, as I drink none; I shall not be suspected of having forged the application. I am no more than humble *scribe*." E. "Then you shall *pre*scribe." BOSWELL. "Very well. The first play of words to-day." J. "No, no; the *bulls* in Ireland." JOHNSON. "Were I your dictator, you should have no wine. It would be my business *cavere ne quid detrimenti Respublica caperet*, and wine is dangerous. Rome was ruined by luxury." (smiling). E. "If you allow no wine as dictator, you shall not have me for your master of horse."

On Saturday, April 4, I drank tea with Johnson at Dr. Taylor's, where he had dined. He entertained us with an account of a tragedy written by a Dr. Kennedy (not the Lisbon physician). * * * * * * *[2]

He was very silent this evening, and read in a variety of books; suddenly throwing down one, and taking up another.

He talked of going to Streatham that night. TAYLOR. "You'll be robbed, if you do; or you must shoot a highwayman. Now I would rather be robbed than do that; I would not shoot a highwayman." JOHNSON. "But I would rather shoot him in the instant when he is attempting to rob me, than afterwards swear against him at the Old Bailey, to take away his life, after he has robbed me. I am surer I am right in the one case, than in the other. I may be mistaken as to the man when I swear; I cannot be mistaken, if I shoot him in the act. Besides, we feel less reluctance to take away a man's life, when

[1] [This supports the conjecture that Dr. Johnson was not the President.—ED.]

[2] [Here a few lines, relating to the disgusting and indelicate subject of this tragedy, are omitted.—ED.]

we are heated by the injury, than to do it at a distance of time by an oath, after we have cooled." BOSWELL. "So, sir, you would rather act from the motive of private passion, than that of publick advantage." JOHNSON. "Nay, sir, when I shoot the highwayman, I act from both." BOSWELL. "Very well, very well. There is no catching him." JOHNSON. "At the same time, one does not know what to say. For perhaps one may, a year after, hang himself from uneasiness for having shot a highwayman[1]. Few minds are fit to be trusted with so great a thing." BOSWELL. "Then, sir, you would not shoot him?" JOHNSON. "But I might be vexed afterwards for that too."

Thrale's carriage not having come for him, as he expected, I accompanied him some part of the way home to his own house. I told him, that I had talked of him[2] to Mr. Dunning a few days before, and had said, that in his company we did not so much interchange conversation, as listen to him; and that Dunning observed, upon this, "One is always willing to listen to Dr. Johnson;" to which I answered, "That is a great deal from you, sir." "Yes, sir," said Johnson, "a great deal indeed. Here is a man willing to listen, to whom the world is listening all the rest of the year." BOSWELL. "I think, sir, it is right to tell one man of such a handsome

[1] The late Duke of Montrose was generally said to have been uneasy on that account; but I can contradict the report from his grace's own authority. As he used to admit me to very easy conversation with him, I took the liberty to introduce the subject. His grace told me, that when riding one night near London, he was attacked by two highwaymen on horseback, and that he instantly shot one of them, upon which the other galloped off; that his servant, who was very well mounted, proposed to pursue him and take him, but that his grace said, "No, we have had blood enough; I hope the man may live to repent." His grace, upon my presuming to put the question, assured me, that his mind was not at all clouded by what he had thus done in self-defence.—BOSWELL. [This is another striking instance of Mr. Boswell's readiness to ask questions. His curiosity has benefited us, but few could have the boldness to have made such inquiries.—ED.]

[2] [Yet Mr. Boswell sometimes censures Mrs. Thrale for flattery!—ED.]

thing, which has been said of him by another. It tends to increase benevolence." JOHNSON. "Undoubtedly it is right, sir."

On Tuesday, April 7, I breakfasted with him at his house. He said, "Nobody was content." I mentioned to him a respectable person [1] in Scotland whom he knew; and I asserted, that I really believed he was always content. JOHNSON. "No, sir, he is not content with the present; he has always some new scheme, some new plantation, something which is future. You know he was not content as a widower, for he married again." BOSWELL. "But he is not restless." JOHNSON. "Sir, he is only locally at rest. A chymist is locally at rest; but his mind is hard at work. This gentleman has done with external exertions. It is too late for him to engage in distant projects." BOSWELL. "He seems to amuse himself quite well; to have his attention fixed, and his tranquillity preserved by very small matters. I have tried this; but it would not do with me." JOHNSON (laughing). "No, sir; it must be born with a man to be contented to take up with little things. Women have a great advantage that they may take up with little things without disgracing themselves: a man cannot, except with fiddling. Had I learnt to fiddle, I should have done nothing else." BOSWELL. "Pray, sir, did you ever play on any musical instrument?" JOHNSON. "No, sir. I once bought me a flagelet; but I never made out a tune." BOSWELL. "A flagelet, sir!—so small an instrument[2]? I should have liked to hear you play on the violoncello. *That*

[1] [Lord Auchinleck, Mr. Boswell's father.—ED.]

[2] When I told this to Miss Seward, she smiled, and repeated with admirable readiness, from "Acis and Galatea,"

"Bring me a hundred reeds of ample growth,
To make a pipe for my *capacious mouth*."—BOSWELL.

should have been *your* instrument." JOHNSON. "Sir, I might as well have played on the violoncello as another; but I should have done nothing else. No, sir; a man would never undertake great things, could he be amused with small. I once tried knotting. Dempster's[1] sister undertook to teach me; but I could not learn it." BOSWELL. "So, sir; it will be related in pompous narrative, 'Once for his amusement he tried knotting; nor did this Hercules disdain the distaff.'" JOHNSON. "Knitting of stockings is a good amusement. As a freeman of Aberdeen, I should be a knitter of stockings." He asked me to go down with him and dine at Mr. Thrale's at Streatham, to which I agreed. I had lent him "An Account of Scotland, in 1702," written by a man of various inquiry, an English chaplain to a regiment stationed there. JOHNSON. "It is sad stuff, sir, miserably written, as books in general then were. There is now an elegance of style universally diffused. No man now writes so ill as 'Martin's Account of the Hebrides' is written. A man could not write so ill, if he should try. Set a merchant's clerk now to write, and he'll do better."

He talked to me with serious concern of a certain female friend's[2] "laxity of narration, and inattention to

[1] [This is probably a mistake. Johnson does not appear to have had any acquaintance with Mr. Dempster's family. His early friend, Mr. *Dyer*, had a sister, with whom there is reason to suppose that Johnson was on terms of intimacy; and Mr. Boswell, in copying his notes (in which perhaps the name was abbreviated), may have mistaken Dyer for Dempster.—ED.]

[2] [Mrs. Thrale. Dr. Johnson is here made to say, that he was "*weary* of chiding her on this subject." It is, however, remarkable that in all his letters to her—written certainly with equal freedom and affection—there should be no allusion of this kind. Without accusing Mr. Boswell of stating what was not true, we may suspect that on these occasions he did not tell the *whole* truth; and that Dr. Johnson's expressions were *answers* to *suggestions* of his own; and to enable us to judge fairly of the answer, the suggestion itself should have been stated. This seems the more probable from Johnson's saying, "*Do talk to her of it*;" which would have been a violation of all decency and friendship (considering the relative situations of Mrs. Thrale, Dr. Johnson, and Mr. Boswell), if it did not allude to some particular fact of which Boswell himself had complained.—ED.]

truth." "I am as much vexed," said he, "at the ease with which she hears it mentioned to her, as at the thing itself. I told her, 'Madam, you are contented to hear every day said to you, what the highest of mankind have died for, rather than bear.' You know, sir, the highest of mankind have died rather than bear to be told they had uttered a falsehood. Do talk to her of it: I am weary."

BOSWELL. "Was not Dr. John Campbell a very inaccurate man in his narrative, sir? He once told me, that he drank thirteen bottles of port at a sitting[1]." JOHNSON. "Why, sir, I do not know that Campbell ever lied with pen and ink; but you could not entirely depend on any thing he told you in conversation, if there was fact mixed with it. However, I loved Campbell: he was a solid orthodox man: he had a reverence for religion. Though defective in practice, he was religious in principle; and he did nothing grossly wrong that I have heard[2]."

I told him that I had been present the day before, when Mrs. Montagu, the literary lady, sat to Miss Reynolds for her picture; and that she said, "she had bound up Mr. Gibbon's History without the last two offensive chapters; for that she thought the book so far good, as it gave, in an elegant manner, the substance of the bad writers *medii ævi*, which the

[1] Lord Macartney observes upon this passage, "I have heard him tell many things, which, though embellished by their mode of narrative, had their foundation in truth; but I never remember any thing approaching to this. If he had written it, I should have supposed some wag had put the figure of one before the three." I am, however, absolutely certain that Dr. Campbell told me it, and I gave particular attention to it, being myself a lover of wine, and therefore curious to hear whatever is remarkable concerning drinking. There can be no doubt that some men can drink, without suffering any injury, such a quantity as to others appears incredible. It is but fair to add, that Dr. Campbell told me, he took a very long time to this great potation; and I have heard Dr. Johnson say, "Sir, if a man drinks very slowly, and lets one glass evaporate before he takes another, I know not how long he may drink." Dr. Campbell mentioned a colonel of militia who sat with him all the time, and drank equally. —BOSWELL.

[2] Dr. John Campbell died about two years before this conversation took place; Dec. 10, 1776.—MALONE. [See *ante*, v. ii. p. 117. 203.—ED.]

late Lord Lyttleton advised her to read." JOHNSON. "Sir, she has not read them: she shows none of this impetuosity to me: she does not know Greek, and, I fancy, knows little Latin. She is willing you should think she knows them; but she does not say she does[1]." BOSWELL. "Mr. Harris, who was present, agreed with her." JOHNSON. "Harris was laughing at her, sir. Harris is a sound sullen scholar; he does not like interlopers. Harris, however, is a prig, and a bad prig[2]. I looked into his book, and thought he did not understand his own system." BOSWELL. "He says plain things in a formal and abstract way, to be sure; but his method is good: for to have clear notions upon any subject, we must have recourse to analytick arrangement." JOHNSON. "Sir, it is what every body does, whether they will or no. But sometimes things may be made darker by definition. I see a *cow*. I define her, *Animal quadrupes ruminans cornutum*. But a goat ruminates, and a cow may have no horns. *Cow* is plainer." BOSWELL. "I think Dr. Franklin's definition of *Man* a good one—'A tool-making animal.'" JOHNSON. "But many a man never made a tool: and suppose a man without arms, he could not make a tool."

[1] [All this must be truncated and distorted. Mrs. Montagu did *not* say that she had *read* these authors, but had been advised to read them; and the inference from what she did say might be, that she had read Gibbon *instead:* and surely the word "*impetuosity*" must be a mistake, arising, perhaps, from Mr. Boswell's not being able to decipher his own manuscript. Then, again, Mr. Harris is said to *agree with her*—in what?—in thinking that Gibbon's History gave, in an elegant manner, the substance of the writers of the *medii ævi*. How could this be laughing at her? Mr. Boswell says elsewhere of himself, *brevis esse laboro, obscurus fio.*—ED.]

[2] What my friend meant by these words concerning the amiable philosopher of Salisbury, I am at a loss to understand. A friend suggests, that Johnson thought his *manner* as a writer affected, while at the same time the *matter* did not compensate for that fault. In short, that he meant to make a remark quite different from that which a *celebrated gentleman* made on a very eminent physician: He is a coxcomb, but a *satisfactory coxcomb*.—BOSWELL. The *celebrated gentleman* here alluded to was the late Right Honourable William Gerard Hamilton.—MALONE.

Talking of drinking wine, he said, "I did not leave off wine, because I could not bear it; I have drunk three bottles of port without being the worse for it. University College has witnessed this." BOSWELL. "Why then, sir, did you leave it off?" JOHNSON. "Why, sir, because it is so much better for a man to be sure that he is never to be intoxicated, never to lose the power over himself. I shall not begin to drink wine again till I grow old [1], and want it." BOSWELL. "I think, sir, you once said to me, that not to drink wine was a great deduction from life." JOHNSON. "It is a diminution of pleasure, to be sure; but I do not say a diminution of happiness. There is more happiness in being rational." BOSWELL. "But if we could have pleasure always, should not we be happy? The greatest part of men would compound for pleasure." JOHNSON. "Supposing we could have pleasure always, an intellectual man would not compound for it. The greatest part of men would compound, because the greatest part of men are gross." BOSWELL. "I allow there may be greater pleasure than from wine. I have had more pleasure from your conversation. I have indeed; I assure you I have." JOHNSON. "When we talk of pleasure, we mean sensual pleasure. * * * * *[2] Philosophers tell you, that pleasure is *contrary* to happiness. Gross men prefer animal pleasure. So there are men who have preferred living among savages. Now what a wretch must he be, who is content with such conversation as can be had among savages! You may remember an officer at Fort Augustus, who had served in America, told us of a woman whom they were obliged to *bind*, in order to get her back from savage life." BOSWELL. "She

[1] [He was now *in his seventieth year*.—ED.]
[2] [Two lines are here omitted.—ED.]

must have been an animal, a beast." JOHNSON. "Sir, she was a speaking cat."

I mentioned to him that I had become very weary in company where I heard not a single intellectual sentence, except that a man who had been settled ten years in Minorca was become a much inferiour man to what he was in London, because a man's mind grows narrow in a narrow place." JOHNSON. "A man's mind grows narrow in a narrow place, whose mind is enlarged only because he has lived in a large place: but what is got by books and thinking is preserved in a narrow place as well as in a large place. A man cannot know modes of life as well in Minorca as in London; but he may study mathematicks as well in Minorca." BOSWELL. "I don't know, sir: if you had remained ten years in the Isle of Col, you would not have been the man that you now are." JOHNSON. "Yes, sir, if I had been there from fifteen to twenty-five; but not if from twenty-five to thirty-five." BOSWELL. "I own, sir, the spirits which I have in London make me do every thing with more readiness and vigour. I can talk twice as much in London as any where else."

Of Goldsmith, he said, "He was not an agreeable companion, for he talked always for fame[1]. A man who does so never can be pleasing. The man who talks to unburden his mind is the man to delight you. An eminent friend of ours[2] is not so agreeable as the variety of his knowledge would otherwise make him, because he talks partly from ostentation."

Soon after our arrival at Thrale's, I heard one of the maids calling eagerly on another to go to Dr. Johnson. I wondered what this could mean. I afterwards learnt, that it was to give her a Bible,

[1] [See *ante*, vol. ii. p. 179. 168. 502, and vol. iii. p. 401.—ED.]
[2] [Mr. Burke.—ED.]

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which he had brought from London as a present to her.

He was for a considerable time occupied in reading "Memoires de Fontenelle," leaning and swinging upon the low gate into the court, without his hat.

I looked into Lord Kaimes's "Sketches of the History of Man;" and mentioned to Dr. Johnson his censure of Charles the Fifth, for celebrating his funeral obsequies in his life-time, which, I told him, I had been used to think a solemn and affecting act. JOHNSON. "Why, sir, a man may dispose his mind to think so of that act of Charles; but it is so liable to ridicule, that if one man out of ten thousand laughs at it, he 'll make the other nine thousand nine hundred and ninety-nine laugh too." I could not agree with him in this.

Hawk. Apoph. p. 209. [Johnson thought very well of Lord Kaimes's Elements of Criticism; of others of his writings he thought very indifferently, and laughed much at his opinion that war was a good thing occasionally, as so much valour and virtue were exhibited in it. "A fire," says Johnson, "might as well be thought a good thing; there is the bravery and address of the firemen in extinguishing it; there is much humanity exerted in saving the lives and properties of the poor sufferers; yet," says he, "after all this, who can say a fire is a good thing?"]

Sir John Pringle had expressed a wish that I would ask Dr. Johnson's opinion what were the best English sermons for style. I took an opportunity to-day of mentioning several to him. "Atterbury?" JOHNSON. "Yes, sir, one of the best." BOSWELL. "Tillotson?" JOHNSON. "Why, not now. I should not advise a preacher at this day to imitate Tillotson's style; though I don't know; I should be cautious of objecting to what has been applauded by so many suf-

frages.—South is one of the best, if you except his peculiarities, and his violence, and sometimes coarseness of language.—Seed has a very fine style; but he is not very theological.—Jortin's sermons are very elegant.—Sherlock's style, too, is very elegant, though he has not made it his principal study.—And you may add Smalridge. All the latter preachers have a good style. Indeed, nobody now talks much of style: every body composes pretty well. There are no such inharmonious periods as there were a hundred years ago. I should recommend Dr. Clarke's sermons, were he orthodox. However, it is very well known *where* he is not orthodox, which was upon the doctrine of the Trinity, as to which he is a condemned heretick; so one is aware of it." BOSWELL. "I like Ogden's Sermons on Prayer very much, both for neatness of style and subtilty of reasoning." JOHNSON. "I should like to read all that Ogden has written." BOSWELL. "What I wish to know is, what sermons afford the best specimen of English pulpit eloquence." JOHNSON. "We have no sermons addressed to the passions, that are good for any thing; if you mean that kind of eloquence." A CLERGYMAN (whose name I do not recollect). "Were not Dodd's sermons addressed to the passions?" JOHNSON. "They were nothing, sir, be they addressed to what they may."

At dinner, Mrs. Thrale expressed a wish to go and see Scotland. JOHNSON. "Seeing Scotland, madam, is only seeing a worse England. It is seeing the flower gradually fade away to the naked stalk. Seeing the Hebrides, indeed, is seeing quite a different scene."

Our poor friend, Mr. Thomas Davies, was soon to have a benefit at Drury-lane Theatre, as some relief

to his unfortunate circumstances. We were all warmly interested for his success, and had contributed to it. However, we thought there was no harm in having our joke, when he could not be hurt by it. I proposed that he should be brought on to speak a prologue upon the occasion; and I began to mutter fragments of what it might be: as, that when now grown *old*, he was obliged to cry "Poor Tom's *a-cold*;"—that he owned he had been driven from the stage by a Churchill, but that this was no disgrace, for a Churchill had beat the French;—that he had been satirized as "mouthing a sentence as curs mouth a bone," but he was now glad of a bone to pick. "Nay," said Johnson, "I would have him to say,

'Mad Tom is come to see the world again.'"

He and I returned to town in the evening. Upon the road, I endeavoured to maintain in argument, that a landed gentleman is not under any obligation to reside upon his estate; and that by living in London he does no injury to his country. JOHNSON. "Why, sir, he does no injury to his country in general, because the money which he draws from it gets back again in circulation; but to his particular district, his particular parish, he does an injury. All that he has to give away is not given to those who have the first claim to it. And though I have said that the money circulates back, it is a long time before that happens. Then, sir, a man of family and estate ought to consider himself as having the charge of a district, over which he is to diffuse civility and happiness [1]."

Next day I found him at home in the morning.

[1] See, however, *ante*, p. 28, where his decision on this subject is more favourable to the absentee.—MALONE.

He praised Delany's "Observations on Swift;" said that his book and Lord Orrery's might both be true, though one viewed Swift more, and the other less favourably; and that, between both, we might have a complete notion of Swift.

Talking of a man's resolving to deny himself the use of wine, from moral and religious considerations, he said, "He must not doubt about it. When one doubts as to pleasure, we know what will be the conclusion. I now no more think of drinking wine, than a horse does. The wine upon the table is no more for me, than for the dog who is under the table."

On Thursday, April 9, I dined with him at Sir Joshua Reynolds's, with the Bishop of St. Asaph (Dr. Shipley), Mr. Allan Ramsay[1], Mr. Gibbon, Mr. Cambridge, and Mr. Langton. Mr. Ramsay had lately returned from Italy, and entertained us with his observations upon Horace's villa, which he had examined with great care. I relished this much, as it brought fresh into my mind what I had viewed with great pleasure thirteen years before. The bishop, Dr. Johnson, and Mr. Cambridge, joined with Mr. Ramsay, in recollecting the various lines in Horace relating to the subject.

Horace's journey to Brundusium being mentioned, Johnson observed that the brook which he describes is to be seen now, exactly as at that time; and that he had often wondered how it happened, that small brooks, such as this, kept the same situation for ages, notwithstanding earthquakes, by which even mountains have been changed, and agriculture, which produces such a variation upon the surface of the

[1] [An eminent painter; son of the Scottish poet; born in 1709; died, in 1784, at Dover, on his return from his fourth visit to Italy.—ED.]

earth. CAMBRIDGE. "A Spanish writer has this thought in a poetical conceit. After observing that most of the solid structures of Rome are totally perished, while the Tiber remains the same, he adds,

'Lo que èrà firme huió, solamente
Lo Fugitivo permanece y dura.'"

JOHNSON. "Sir, that is taken from Janus Vitalis:

'_____ immota labescunt;
Et quæ perpetuò sunt agitata manent.'"

The bishop said, it appeared from Horace's writings that he was a cheerful contented man. JOHNSON. "We have no reason to believe that, my lord. Are we to think Pope was happy, because he says so in his writings? We see in his writings what he wished the state of his mind to appear. Dr. Young, who pined for preferment, talks with contempt of it in his writings, and affects to despise every thing that he did not despise." BISHOP OF ST. ASAPH. "He was like other chaplains, looking for vacancies: but that is not peculiar to the clergy. I remember, when I was with the army, after the battle of Lafeldt, the officers seriously grumbled that no general was killed." CAMBRIDGE. "We may believe Horace more, when he says,

1 Ep. viii. 12. 'Romæ Tibur amem ventosus, Tibure Romam;'

than when he boasts of his consistency:

1 Ep. xiv. 16. 'Me constare mihi scis, et discedere tristem,
Quandocunque trahunt invisa negotia Romam.'"

BOSWELL. "How hard is it that man can never be at rest!" RAMSAY. "It is not in his nature to be at rest. When he is at rest, he is in the worst state

that he can be in: for he has nothing to agitate him. He is then like the man in the Irish song [1],

> 'There lived a young man in Ballinacrazy,
> Who wanted a wife for to make him unaisy.'"

Goldsmith being mentioned, Johnson observed, that it was long before his merit came to be acknowledged: that he once complained to him, in ludicrous terms of distress, "Whenever I write any thing, the publick *make a point* to know nothing about it:" but that his "Traveller [2]" brought him into high reputation. LANGTON. "There is not one bad line in that poem; not one of Dryden's careless verses." SIR JOSHUA. "I was glad to hear Charles Fox say, it was one of the finest poems in the English language." LANGTON. "Why were you glad? You surely had no doubt of this before." JOHNSON. "No; the merit of 'The Traveller' is so well established, that Mr. Fox's praise cannot augment it, nor his censure diminish it." SIR JOSHUA. "But his friends may suspect they had too great a partiality for him." JOHNSON. "Nay, sir, the partiality of his friends was always against him. It was with difficulty we could give him a hearing. Goldsmith had no settled notions upon any subject; so he talked always at random. It seemed to be his intention to blurt out whatever was in his mind, and see what would become of it. He was angry, too, when catched in an absurdity; but it did not prevent him from falling into another the next minute. I remember Chamier, after talking with him some

[1] [Called "Alley Croker." This lady, a celebrated beauty in her day, was the youngest daughter of Colonel Croker, of Ballinagard, in the county of Limerick. The lover whose rejection has immortalised her name is not known; but she married Charles Langley, esq., of Lisnarnock. She died without issue, about the middle of the last century.—ED.]

[2] First published in 1765.—MALONE.

time, said, 'Well, I do believe he wrote this poem himself; and, let me tell you, that is believing a great deal.' Chamier once asked him, what he meant by *slow*, the last word in the first line of 'The Traveller,'

'Remote, unfriended, melancholy, slow.'

Did he mean tardiness of locomotion? Goldsmith, who would say something without consideration, answered, 'Yes.' I was sitting by, and said, 'No, sir, you do not mean tardiness of locomotion; you mean that sluggishness of mind which comes upon a man in solitude.' Chamier believed then that I had written the line, as much as if he had seen me write it[1]. Goldsmith, however, was a man, who, whatever he wrote, did it better than any other man could do. He deserved a place in Westminster Abbey; and every year he lived would have deserved it better. He had, indeed, been at no pains to fill his mind with knowledge. He transplanted it from one place to another, and it did not settle in his mind; so he could not tell what was in his own books."

We talked of living in the country. JOHNSON. "No wise man will go to live in the country, unless he has something to do which can be better done in the country. For instance; if he is to shut himself up for a year to study a science, it is better to look out to the fields than to an opposite wall[2]. Then if a man walks out in the country, there is nobody to

[1] [See *ante*, vol. ii. p. 6, as to the lines of this poem which Johnson wrote.—ED.]

[2] [Mr. Cumberland was of a contrary opinion. "In the ensuing year I again paid a visit to my father at Clonfert; and there, in a little closet, at the back of the *palace*, as it was called, unfurnished, and out of use, with no other prospect from its single window but that of a turf-stack, with which it was almost in contact, I seated myself by choice, and began to plan and compose *The West Indian*. In all my hours of study, it has been through life my object so to locate myself as to have little or nothing to distract my attention, and, therefore, brilliant rooms or pleasant prospects I have ever avoided. A dead wall, or, as

keep him from walking in again; but if a man walks out in London, he is not sure when he shall walk in again. A great city is, to be sure, the school for studying life; and 'The proper study of mankind is man,' as Pope observes." BOSWELL. "I fancy London is the best place for society; though I have heard that the very first society of Paris is still beyond any thing that we have here." JOHNSON. "Sir, I question if in Paris such a company as is sitting round this table could be got together in less than half a year. They talk in France of the felicity of men and women living together: the truth is, that there the men are not higher than the women, they know no more than the women do, and they are not held down in their conversation by the presence of women." RAMSAY. "Literature is upon the growth, it is in its spring in France: here it is rather *passée*." JOHNSON. "Literature was in France long before we had it. Paris was the second city for the revival of letters: Italy had it first, to be sure. What have we done for literature, equal to what was done by the Stephani and others in France? Our literature came to us through France. Caxton printed only two books, Chaucer and Gower, that were not translations from the French; and Chaucer, we know, took much from the Italians. No, sir, if literature be in its spring in France, it is a second spring; it is after a winter. We are now before the French in literature: but we had it long after them. In England, any man who wears a sword and a powdered wig is ashamed to be illiterate. I believe it is not so in France. Yet there is, probably, a great deal of

in the present case, an Irish turf-stack, are not attractions that can call off the fancy from its pursuits; and whilst in those pursuits it can find interest and occupation, it wants no outward aids to cheer it."—*Mem.* vol. i. p. 271. 277. —ED.]

learning in France, because they have such a number of religious establishments; so many men who have nothing else to do but to study. I do not know this; but I take it upon the common principles of chance. Where there are many shooters, some will hit."

We talked of old age. Johnson (now in his seventieth year) said, "It is a man's own fault, it is from want of use, if his mind grows torpid in old age[1]." The bishop asked, if an old man does not lose faster than he gets. JOHNSON. "I think not, my lord, if he exerts himself." One of the company rashly observed, that he thought it was happy for an old man that insensibility comes upon him. JOHNSON (with a noble elevation and disdain). "No, sir, I should never be happy by being less rational." BISHOP OF ST. ASAPH. "Your wish then, sir, is γηρασκειν διδασκομενος." JOHNSON. "Yes, my lord." His lordship mentioned a charitable establishment in Wales, where people were maintained, and supplied with every

[1] Hobbes was of the same opinion with Johnson on this subject; and, in his answer to D'Avenant's Preface to Gondibert, with great spirit, explodes the current opinion, that the mind in old age is subject to a necessary and irresistible debility. "And now, while I think on't," says the philosopher, "give me leave, with a short discord, to sweeten the harmony of the approaching close. I have nothing to object to your poem, but dissent only from something in your preface, sounding to the prejudice of age. It is commonly said, that old age is a return to childhood: which methinks you insist on so long, as if you desired it should be believed. That's the note I mean to shake a little. That saying, meant only of the weakness of body, was wrested to the weakness of mind, by froward children, weary of the controlment of their parents, masters, and other admonitors. Secondly, the dotage and childishness they ascribe to age is never the effect of time, but sometimes of the excesses of youth, and not a returning to, but a continual stay with childhood. For they that want the curiosity of furnishing their memories with the rarities of nature in their youth, and pass their time in making provision only for their ease and sensual delight, are children still, at what years soever; as they that coming into a populous city, never going out of their inn, are strangers still, how long soever they have been there. Thirdly, there is no reason for any man to think himself wiser to-day than yesterday, which does not equally convince he shall be wiser to-morrow than to-day. Fourthly, you will be forced to change your opinion hereafter, when you are old; and, in the meantime, you discredit all I have said before in your commendation, because I am old already.—But no more of this." Hobbes, when he wrote these pleasing and sensible remarks, was sixty-two years old, and D'Avenant forty-five.—MALONE.

thing, upon the condition of their contributing the weekly produce of their labour; and, he said, they grew quite torpid for want of property. JOHNSON. "They have no object for hope. Their condition cannot be better. It is rowing without a port."

One of the company asked him the meaning of the expression in Juvenal, *unius lacertæ*. JOHNSON. "I think it clear enough; as much ground as one may have a chance to find a lizard upon."

Commentators have differed as to the exact meaning of the expression by which the poet intended to enforce the sentiment contained in the passage where these words occur. It is enough that they mean to denote even a very small possession, provided it be a man's own:

> "Est aliquid, quocunque loco, quocunque recessu, 3 Sat.
> Unius sese dominum fecisse lacertæ." 231.

This season there was a whimsical fashion in the newspapers of applying Shakspeare's words to describe living persons well known in the world; which was done under the title of "Modern Characters from Shakspeare;" many of which were admirably adapted. The fancy took so much, that they were afterwards collected into a pamphlet. Somebody said to Johnson, across the table, that he had not been in those characters. "Yes," said he, "I have. I should have been sorry to have been left out." He then repeated what had been applied to him:

> "You must borrow me Garagantua's mouth."

Miss Reynolds not perceiving at once the meaning of this, he was obliged to explain it to her, which had something of an awkward and ludicrous effect. "Why, madam, it has a reference to me, as using big words, which require the mouth of a giant to

pronounce them. Garagantua is the name of a giant in Rabelais.[22] BOSWELL. "But, sir, there is another amongst them for you:

'He would not flatter Neptune for his trident,
Or Jove for his power to thunder.'"

JOHNSON. "There is nothing marked in that. No. Sir, Garagantua is the best." Notwithstanding this ease and good humour, when I, a little while afterwards, repeated his sarcasm on Kenrick[1], which was received with applause, he asked, "*Who* said that?" and on my suddenly answering,—*Garagantua*, he looked serious, which was a sufficient indication that he did not wish it to be kept up. [Previous however to this some newspaper had described Johnson and Goldsmith as the pedant and his flatterer in Love's Labour Lost. Goldsmith came to his friend, fretting and foaming, and vowing vengeance against the printer, &c. till Dr. Johnson, tired of the bustle, and desirous to think of something else, cried out at last, "Why, what wouldest thou have, dear doctor? who the plague is hurt with all this nonsense? and how is a man the worse I wonder in his health, purse, or character, for being called *Holofernes?*" "I do not know," replies the other, "how you may relish being called Holofernes, but I do not like at least to play *Goodman Dull.*"]

Piozzi, p. 139.

When we went to the drawing-room, there was a rich assemblage. Besides the company who had been at dinner, there were Mr. Garrick, Mr. Harris of Salisbury, Dr. Percy, Dr. Burney, the Honourable Mrs. Cholmondeley, Miss Hannah More, &c. &c.

After wandering about in a kind of pleasing distraction for some time, I got into a corner, with Johnson, Garrick, and Harris. GARRICK (to Harris).

[1] See vol. i. p. 517.

"Pray, sir, have you read Potter's Æschylus?" HARRIS. "Yes; and think it pretty." GARRICK (to Johnson). "And what think you, sir, of it?" JOHNSON. "I thought what I read of it *verbiage:* but upon Mr. Harris's recommendation, I will read a play. (To Mr. Harris.) Don't prescribe two." Mr. Harris suggested one, I do not remember which. JOHNSON. "We must try its effect as an English poem; that is the way to judge of the merit of a translation. Translations are, in general, for people who cannot read the original." I mentioned the vulgar saying, that Pope's Homer was not a good representation of the original. JOHNSON. "Sir, it is the greatest work of the kind that has ever been produced." BOSWELL. "The truth is, it is impossible perfectly to translate poetry. In a different language it may be the same tune, but it has not the same tone. Homer plays it on a bassoon; Pope on a flagelet." HARRIS. "I think, heroick poetry is best in blank verse; yet it appears that rhyme is essential to English poetry, from our deficiency in metrical quantities. In my opinion, the chief excellence of our language is numerous prose." JOHNSON. "Sir, William Temple was the first writer who gave cadence to English prose [1]. Before his time they were careless

[1] The author in vol. i. p. 196, says, that Johnson once told him, "that he had formed his style upon that of Sir William Temple, and upon Chambers's Proposal for his Dictionary. He certainly was mistaken; or, if he imagined at first that he was imitating Temple, he was very unsuccessful, for nothing can be more unlike than the simplicity of Temple and the richness of Johnson." This observation of our author, on the first view, seems perfectly just; but, on a closer examination, it will, I think, appear to have been founded on a misapprehension. Mr. Boswell understood Johnson too literally. He did not, I conceive, mean, that he endeavoured to imitate Temple's style in all its parts; but that he formed his style on him and Chambers (perhaps the paper published in 1737, relative to his second edition, entitled "Considerations," &c.), taking from each what was most worthy of imitation. The passage before us, I think, shows that he learned from Temple to modulate his periods, and, *in that respect only*, made him his pattern. In this view of the subject there is no difficulty. He might learn from Chambers, compactness, strength, and precision (in opposition to the laxity of style which had long prevailed); from Sir Thomas Browne (who was certainly one of his archetypes), *pondera verborum*, vigour and energy of expression; and from Temple, harmonious arrangement,

of arrangement, and did not mind whether a sentence ended with an important word or an insignificant word, or with what part of speech it was concluded." Mr. Langton, who now had joined us, commended Clarendon. JOHNSON. "He is objected to for his parentheses, his involved clauses, and his want of harmony. But he is supported by his matter. It is, indeed, owing to a plethory of matter that his style is so faulty: every *substance* (smiling to Mr. Harris) has so many *accidents*.—To be distinct, we must talk *analytically*. If we analyse language, we must speak of it grammatically; if we analyse argument, we must speak of it logically." GARRICK. "Of all the translations that ever were attempted, I think Elphinston's Martial the most extraordinary [1]. He consulted me upon it, who am a little of an epigrammatist myself, you know. I told him freely, 'You don't seem to have that turn.' I asked him if he was serious; and finding he was, I advised him against publishing. Why, his translation is more difficult to understand than the original. I thought him a man of some talents; but he seems crazy in this." JOHNSON. "Sir, you have done what I had not courage to do. But he did not ask my advice, and I did not force it upon him, to make him angry with me." GARRICK. "But as a friend, sir—" JOHNSON. "Why, such a friend as I am with him—no." GARRICK. "But if you see a friend going to tumble over a precipice?" JOHNSON. "That is an extravagant case, sir. You are sure a friend will thank you for hindering him from tumbling over a precipice: but, in the other case, I should hurt his vanity, and do him no good. He would not take my advice.

the due collocation of words, and the other arts and graces of composition here enumerated: and yet, after all, his style might bear no striking resemblance to that of any of these writers, though it had profited by each.—MALONE.

[1] [See *ante*, vol. i. p. 186.—ED.]

His brother-in-law, Strahan, sent him a subscription of fifty pounds, and said he would send him fifty more, if he would not publish." GARRICK. "What! eh! is Strahan a good judge of an epigram? Is not he rather an *obtuse* man, eh?" JOHNSON. "Why, sir, he may not be a judge of an epigram: but you see he is a judge of what is *not* an epigram." BOSWELL. "It is easy for you, Mr. Garrick, to talk to an authour as you talked to Elphinston; you, who have been so long the manager of a theatre, rejecting the plays of poor authours. You are an old judge, who have often pronounced sentence of death. You are a practised surgeon, who have often amputated limbs; and though this may have been for the good of your patients, they cannot like you. Those who have undergone a dreadful operation are not very fond of seeing the operator again." GARRICK. "Yes, I know enough of that. There was a reverend gentleman (Mr. Hawkins), who wrote a tragedy, the SIEGE of something[1], which I refused." HARRIS. "So, the siege was raised." JOHNSON. "Ay, he came to me and complained; and told me, that Garrick said his play was wrong in the *concoction*. Now, what is the concoction of a play!" (Here Garrick started, and twisted himself, and seemed sorely vexed; for Johnson told me, he believed the story was true). GARRICK. "I—I—I—said, *first* concoction[2]." JOHNSON (smiling). "Well, he left out *first*. And Rich, he said, refused him *in false English:* he could show it under his hand." GARRICK. "He wrote to me in violent wrath, for having refused his play: 'Sir, this is growing a very serious and terrible af-

[1] It was called "The Siege of Aleppo." Mr. Hawkins, the authour of it, was formerly professor of poetry at Oxford. It is printed in his "Miscellanies," 3 vols. 8vo.—BOSWELL.

[2] Garrick had high authority for this expression. Dryden uses it in his preface to "Œdipus."—MALONE. [And surely "*concoction*" alone was as good as "*first* concoction," which latter phrase Johnson was willing to admit.—ED.]

fair. I am resolved to publish my play. I will appeal to the world; and how will your judgment appear?' I answered, 'Sir, notwithstanding all the seriousness, and all the terrours, I have no objection to your publishing your play: and as you live at a great distance (Devonshire, I believe), if you will send it to me, I will convey it to the press.' I never heard more of it, ha! ha! ha!"

On Friday, April 10, I found Johnson at home in the morning. We resumed the conversation of yesterday. He put me in mind of some of it which had escaped my memory, and enabled me to record it more perfectly than I otherwise could have done. He was much pleased with my paying so great attention to his recommendation in 1763, the period when our acquaintance began, that I should keep a journal; and I could perceive he was secretly pleased to find so much of the fruit of his mind preserved; and as he had been used to imagine and say that he always laboured when he said a good thing,—it delighted him, on a review, to find that his conversation teemed with point and imagery.

I said to him, "You were, yesterday, sir, in remarkably good humour; but there was nothing to offend you, nothing to produce irritation or violence. There was no bold offender. There was not one capital conviction. It was a maiden assize. You had on your white gloves [1]."

He found fault with our friend Langton for having been too silent. "Sir," said I, "you will recollect that he very properly took up Sir Joshua for being glad that Charles Fox had praised Goldsmith's 'Traveller,' and you joined him." JOHNSON. "Yes, sir, I knocked Fox on the head, without ceremony.

[1] [At an assize, where there has been no capital conviction, the judge receives a pair of white gloves.—ED.]

Reynolds is too much under Fox and Burke at present [1]. He is under the *Fox star*, and the *Irish constellation*. He is always under some planet." BOSWELL. "There is no Fox star [2]." JOHNSON. "But there is a dog star." BOSWELL. "They say, indeed, a fox and a dog are the same animal."

I reminded him of a gentleman who, Mrs. Cholmondeley said, was first talkative from affectation, and then silent from the same cause; that he first thought "I shall be celebrated as the liveliest man in every company;" and then, all at once, "O! it is much more respectable to be grave and look wise." "He has reversed the Pythagorean discipline, by being first talkative, and then silent. He reverses the course of nature too; he was first the gay butterfly, and then the creeping worm." Johnson laughed loud and long at this expansion and illustration of what he himself had told me.

We dined together with Mr. Scott (now Sir William Scott, his majesty's advocate general), at his chambers in the Temple, nobody else there. The company being small, Johnson was not in such spirits as he had been the preceding day, and for a considerable time little was said. At last he burst forth: "Subordination is sadly broken down in this age. No man, now, has the same authority which his father had—except a gaoler. No master has it over his servants; it is diminished in our colleges; nay, in our grammar-schools." BOSWELL. "What is the cause of this, sir?" JOHNSON. "Why, the coming in of the Scotch," laughing sarcastically. BOSWELL. "That is to say, things have been turned topsy-turvy.—But your serious cause." JOHNSON. "Why, sir, there are many causes, the chief of which is, I think,

[1] [This seems to support the Editor's conjecture, as to Mr. Fox, *ante*, v. ii. p. 211.—ED.]

[2] [There is a constellation called the *Fox*.—ED.]

the great increase of money. No man now depends upon the lord of a manor, when he can send to another country and fetch provisions. The shoe-black at the entry of my court does not depend on me. I can deprive him but of a penny a day, which he hopes somebody else will bring him; and that penny I must carry to another shoe-black, so the trade suffers nothing. I have explained in my 'Journey to the Hebrides,' how gold and silver destroy feudal subordination. But, besides, there is a general relaxation of reverence. No son now depends upon his father, as in former times. Paternity used to be considered as of itself a great thing, which had a right to many claims. That is, in general, reduced to very small bounds. My hope is, that as anarchy produces tyranny, this extreme relaxation will produce *freni strictio.*"

Talking of fame, for which there is so great a desire, I observed, how little there is of it in reality, compared with the other objects of human attention. "Let every man recollect, and he will be sensible how small a part of his time is employed in talking or thinking of Shakspeare, Voltaire, or any of the most celebrated men that have ever lived, or are now supposed to occupy the attention and admiration of the world. Let this be extracted and compressed; into what a narrow space will it go!" I then slily introduced Mr. Garrick's fame, and his assuming the airs of a great man. JOHNSON. "Sir, it is wonderful how *little* Garrick assumes. No, sir, Garrick *fortunam reverenter habet.* Consider, sir; celebrated men, such as you have mentioned, have had their applause at a distance; but Garrick had it dashed in his face, sounded in his ears, and went home every night with the plaudits of a thousand in his *cranium.* Then, sir, Garrick did not *find*, but *made* his way to

the tables, the levees, and almost the bed-chambers of the great. Then, sir, Garrick had under him a numerous body of people; who, from fear of his power, and hopes of his favour, and admiration of his talents, were constantly submissive to him. And here is a man who has advanced the dignity of his profession. Garrick has made a player a higher character." SCOTT. "And he is a very sprightly writer too." JOHNSON. "Yes, sir; and all this supported by great wealth of his own acquisition. If all this had happened to me, I should have had a couple of fellows with long poles walking before me, to knock down every body that stood in the way. Consider, if all this had happened to Cibber or Quin, they 'd have jumped over the moon. Yet Garrick speaks to *us*" (smiling). BOSWELL. "And Garrick is a very good man, a charitable man." JOHNSON. "Sir, a liberal man. He has given away more money than any man in England. There may be a little vanity mixed: but he has shown, that money is not his first object[1]." BOSWELL. "Yet Foote used to say of him, that he walked out with an intention to do a generous action; but, turning the corner of a street, he met

[1] [Miss Hawkins says, "At Hampton, and in its neighbourhood, Mr. and Mrs. Garrick took the rank of the *noblesse*—every thing was in good taste, and his establishment distinguished—he drove four horses when going to town." She adds the following description of his personal appearance: "I see him now in a dark blue coat, the button-holes bound with gold, a small cocked hat laced with gold, his waistcoat very open, and his countenance never at rest, and, indeed, seldom his person; for, in the relaxation of the country, he gave way to all his natural volatility, and with my father was perfectly at ease, sometimes sitting on a table, and then, if he saw my brothers at a distance on the lawn, shooting off like an arrow out of a bow in a spirited chase of them round the garden. I remember—when my father, having me in his hand, met him on the common, riding his pretty pony—his moving my compassion by lamenting the misery of being summoned to town in hot weather (I think August) to play before the King of Denmark. I thought him sincere, and his case pitiable, till my father assured me that he was in reality very well pleased, and that what he groaned at as labour, was an honour paid to his talents. The natural expression of his countenance was far from placidity. I confess I was afraid of him; more so than I was of Johnson, whom I knew not to be, nor could suppose he ever would be thought to be, an extraordinary man. Garrick had a frown and spoke impetuously. Johnson was slow and kind in his way to children."—*Miss Hawkins's Memoirs*, vol. i. p. 21.—ED.]

with the ghost of a half-penny, which frightened him." JOHNSON. "Why, sir, that is very true, too; for I never knew a man of whom it could be said with less certainty to-day, what he will do to-morrow, than Garrick; it depends so much on his humour at the time." SCOTT. "I am glad to hear of his liberality." He has been represented as very saving." JOHNSON. "With his domestic saving we have nothing to do. I remember drinking tea with him long ago, when Peg Woffington made it, and he grumbled at her for making it too strong[1]. He had then begun to feel money in his purse, and did not know when he should have enough of it." [The generosity of David Garrick to the late Mr. Berenger[2], who had fallen into distress by wit or by negligence, was as memorable and as meritorious. He sent him back his securities for 500*l.* with a donation of a bank note of 300*l.*]

Tyers, p. 75.

On the subject of wealth, the proper use of it, and the effects of that art which is called economy, he observed, "It is wonderful to think how men of very large estates not only spend their yearly incomes, but are often actually in want of money. It is clear they have not value for what they spend. Lord Shelburne[3] told me, that a man of high rank, who looks into his own affairs, may have all that he ought to have, all that can be of any use, or appear with any advantage, for five thousand pounds a year. Therefore, a great proportion must go in waste; and indeed, this is the case with most people, whatever their fortune is." BOSWELL. "I have no doubt, sir, of this. But how

[1] When Johnson told this little anecdote to Sir Joshua Reynolds, he mentioned a circumstance which he omitted to-day—"Why," said Garrick, "it is as red as blood."—BOSWELL.

[2] [See *ante*, vol. ii. p. 84.—ED.]

[3] [It does not appear when or how he was acquainted with Lord Shelburne. Probably he may have met him at his brother's, Mr. Fitzmaurice's. See *post*, May 7th, 1780.—ED.]

is it? What is waste?" JOHNSON. "Why, sir, breaking bottles, and a thousand other things. Waste cannot be accurately told, though we are sensible how destructive it is. Economy on the one hand, by which a certain income is made to maintain a man genteelly, and waste on the other, by which, on the same income, another man lives shabbily, cannot be defined. It is a very nice thing; as one man wears his coat out much sooner than another, we cannot tell how."

We talked of war. JOHNSON. "Every man thinks meanly of himself for not having been a soldier, or not having been at sea." BOSWELL. "Lord Mansfield does not." JOHNSON. "Sir, if Lord Mansfield were in a company of general officers and admirals who have been in service, he would shrink; he'd wish to creep under the table." BOSWELL. "No; he'd think he could *try* them all." JOHNSON. "Yes, if he could catch them: but they'd try him much sooner. No, sir; were Socrates and Charles the Twelfth of Sweden both present in any company, and Socrates to say, 'Follow me, and hear a lecture in philosophy; and Charles, laying his hand on his sword, to say, 'Follow me, and dethrone the Czar,' a man would be ashamed to follow Socrates. Sir, the impression is universal; yet it is strange. As to the sailor, when you look down from the quarter-deck to the space below, you see the utmost extremity of human misery; such crowding, such filth, such stench!" BOSWELL. "Yet sailors are happy." JOHNSON. "They are happy as brutes are happy, with a piece of fresh meat—with the grossest sensuality. But, sir, the profession of soldiers and sailors has the dignity of danger. Mankind reverence those who have got over fear, which is so general a weakness." SCOTT. "But is not courage mechanical, and to be acquired?"

JOHNSON. "Why yes, sir, in a collective sense. Soldiers consider themselves only as part of a great machine." SCOTT. "We find people fond of being sailors." JOHNSON. "I cannot account for that, any more than I can account for other strange perversions of imagination." His abhorrence of the profession of a sailor was uniformly violent; but in conversation he always exalted the profession of a soldier. And yet I have, in my large and various collection of his writings, a letter to an eminent friend, in which he expresses himself thus: "My god-son called on me lately. He is weary, and rationally weary, of a military life. If you can place him in some other state, I think you may increase his happiness, and secure his virtue. A soldier's time is passed in distress and danger, or in idleness and corruption." Such was his cool reflection in his study; but whenever he was warmed and animated by the presence of company, he, like other philosophers whose minds are impregnated with poetical fancy, caught the common enthusiasm for splendid renown.

He talked of Mr. Charles Fox, of whose abilities he thought highly, but observed, that he did not talk much at our Club. I have heard Mr. Gibbon remark, "that Mr. Fox could not be afraid of Dr. Johnson; yet he certainly was very shy of saying any thing in Dr. Johnson's presence." Mr. Scott now quoted what was said of Alcibiades by a Greek poet, to which Johnson assented [1].

[1] Wishing to discover the ancient observation here referred to, I applied to Sir William Scott on the subject, but he had no recollection of it. My old and very learned friend, Dr. Michael Kearney, formerly senior fellow of Trinity College, Dublin, and now Archdeacon of Raphoe in Ireland, has, however, most happily elucidated this passage. He remarks to me that "Mr. Boswell's memory must here have deceived him; and that Mr. Scott's observation must have been, that 'Mr. Fox, in the instance mentioned, might be considered as the *reverse* of *Pharax*;' of whom, as Plutarch relates in the Life of Alcibiades, Eupolis, the tragedian, said, It is true he can *talk*, and yet he is no *speaker*."

He told us, that he had given Mrs. Montague a catalogue of all Daniel Defoe's works of imagination[1]; most, if not all of which, as well as of his other works, he now enumerated, allowing a considerable share of merit to a man, who, bred a tradesman, had written so variously and so well. Indeed, his "Robinson Crusoe" is enough of itself to establish his reputation.

He expressed great indignation at the imposture of the Cock-lane ghost, and related, with much satisfaction, how he had assisted in detecting the cheat, and had published an account of it in the newspapers. Upon this subject I incautiously offended him, by pressing him with too many questions, and he showed his displeasure[2]. I apologised, saying, that "I asked questions in order to be instructed and entertained; I repaired eagerly to the fountain; but that the moment he gave me a hint, the moment he put a lock upon the well, I desisted." "But, sir," said he, "that is forcing one to do a disagreeable thing:" and he continued to rate me. "Nay, sir," said I, "when you have put a lock upon the well, so that I can no longer drink, do not make the fountain of your wit play upon me and wet me."

He sometimes could not bear being teased with questions. I was once present when a gentleman asked so many, as, "What did you do, sir?" "What did you say, sir?" that he at last grew enraged, and said, "I will not be put to the *question*. Don't you consider, sir, that these are not the manners of a

If this discovery had been made by a scholiast on an ancient author, with what ardour and exuberant praise would Bentley or Taylor have spoken of it! Sir William Scott, to whom I communicated Dr. Kearney's remark, is perfectly satisfied that it is correct. A few other observations have been communicated by the same gentleman. Every classical reader will lament that they are not more numerous.—MALONE.

[1] [Probably the list which is to be found in *Cibber's Lives*.—ED.]

[2] [He had little to be proud of in this affair, and, *therefore*, was angry when Boswell pressed him. See *ante*, vol. i. p. 415.—ED.]

gentleman? I will not be baited with *what* and *why;* what is this? what is that? why is a cow's tail long? why is a fox's tail bushy?" The gentleman, who was a good deal out of countenance, said, "Why, sir, you are so good, that I venture to trouble you." JOHNSON. "Sir, my being so *good* is no reason why you should be so *ill.*"

Talking of the Justitia hulk at Woolwich, in which criminals were punished, by being confined to labour, he said, "I do not see that they are punished by this: they must have worked equally, had they never been guilty of stealing. They now only work; so, after all, they have gained; what they stole is clear gain to them; the confinement is nothing. Every man who works is confined: the smith to his shop, the tailor to his garret." BOSWELL. "And Lord Mansfield to his court." JOHNSON. "Yes, sir. You know the notion of confinement may be extended, as in the song, 'Every island is a prison.' There is in Dodsley's collection a copy of verses to the authour of that song[1]."

Smith's Latin verses on Pococke, the great traveller[2], were mentioned. He repeated some of them, and said they were Smith's best verses.

He talked with an uncommon animation of travelling into distant countries; that the mind was enlarged by it, and that an acquisition of dignity of

[1] I have in vain examined Dodsley's Collection for the verses here referred to; nor has the name of the authour been ascertained. The song alluded to begins with the words,

"Welcome, welcome, brother debtor;"

it consists of several stanzas, in one of which it is said, that (see *ante*, vol. ii. p. 480.)

"Every island is a prison."—MALONE.

[2] Smith's Verses are on Edward Pococke, the great oriental linguist: he travelled, it is true; but Dr. Richard Pococke, late Bishop of Ossory, who published Travels through the East, is usually called the *great traveller*.—KEARNEY. [Edward Pococke was Canon of Christ Church and Hebrew Professor in Oxford. The two Pocockes flourished just a century apart; the one, Edward, being born in 1604; Richard, in the year 1704.—HALL.]

character was derived from it. He expressed a particular enthusiasm with respect to visiting the wall of China. I catched it for the moment, and said I really believed I should go and see the wall of China had I not children, of whom it was my duty to take care. "Sir," said he, "by doing so, you would do what would be of importance in raising your children to eminence. There would be a lustre reflected upon them from your spirit and curiosity. They would be at all times regarded as the children of a man who had gone to view the wall of China. I am serious, sir."

When we had left Mr. Scott's, he said, "Will you go home with me?" "Sir," said I, "it is late; but I'll go with you for three minutes." JOHNSON. "Or *four*." We went to Mrs. Williams's room, where we found Mr. Allen the printer, who was the landlord of his house in Bolt-court, a worthy, obliging man, and his very old acquaintance; and what was exceedingly amusing, though he was of a very diminutive size, he used, even in Johnson's presence, to imitate the stately periods and slow and solemn utterance of the great man. I this evening boasted, that although I did not write what is called stenography, or short-hand, in appropriated characters devised for the purpose, I had a method of my own of writing half words, and leaving out some altogether, so as yet to keep the substance and language of any discourse which I had heard so much in view, that I could give it very completely soon after I had taken it down. He defied me, as he had once defied an actual short-hand writer; and he made the experiment by reading slowly and distinctly a part of Robertson's "History of America," while I endeavoured to write it in my way of taking notes. It was found that I had it very imperfectly; the con-

clusion[1] from which was, that its excellence was principally owing to a studied arrangement of words, which could not be varied or abridged without an essential injury.

On Sunday, April 12, I found him at home before dinner; Dr. Dodd's poem, entitled "Thoughts in Prison," was lying upon his table. This appearing to me an extraordinary effort by a man who was in Newgate for a capital crime, I was desirous to hear Johnson's opinion of it: to my surprise, he told me he had not read a line of it. I took up the book and read a passage to him. JOHNSON. "Pretty well, if you are previously disposed to like them." I read another passage, with which he was better pleased. He then took the book into his own hands, and having looked at the prayer at the end of it, he said, "What *evidence* is there that this was composed the night before he suffered? *I* do not believe it." He then read aloud where he prays for the king, &c. and observed, "Sir, do you think that a man, the night before he is to be hanged, cares for the succession of a royal family? Though, he *may* have composed this prayer then. A man who has been canting all his life, may cant to the last. And yet a man who has been refused a pardon after so much petitioning, would hardly be praying thus fervently for the king[2]."

He, and I, and Mrs. Williams, went to dine with

[1] [This is odd reasoning. Most readers would have come to the more obvious conclusion, that Boswell had failed in his experiment at short-hand. This passage may account for some verbal errors and obscurities in this work: when copying his notes, after a considerable lapse of time, Mr. Boswell probably misunderstood his own abbreviations.—ED.]

[2] [It does not seem consistent that Johnson should have *thus* spoken of one, in the sincerity of whose repentance he had so much confidence as to desire to have the *benefit of his prayers*, (*ante*, vol. iii. pp 511, 512). The observation, too, on the prayer "for the king" seems inconsiderate; because, if Dodd was a sincere penitent, he would be anxious to reconcile himself with all mankind, and, as the king might have saved his life, and would not, Dodd's prayer for him was probably neither form nor flattery, (for what could *they* avail him at that hour?) but the proof of contrition, and of the absence of all personal resentment.—ED.]

the Reverend Dr. Percy. Talking of Goldsmith, Johnson said, he was very envious. I defended him, by observing, that he owned it frankly upon all occasions. JOHNSON. "Sir, you are enforcing the charge. He had so much envy, that he could not conceal it. He was so full of it, that he overflowed. He talked of it, to be sure, often enough. Now, sir, what a man avows, he is not ashamed to think; though many a man thinks what he is ashamed to avow. We are all envious naturally; but by checking envy, we get the better of it. So we are all thieves naturally; a child always tries to get at what it wants the nearest way: by good instruction and good habits this is cured, till a man has not even an inclination to seize what is another's; has no struggle with himself about it."

And here I shall record a scene of too much heat between Dr. Johnson and Dr. Percy, which I should have suppressed, were it not that it gave occasion to display the truly tender and benevolent heart of Johnson, who, as soon as he found a friend was at all hurt by any thing which he had "said in his wrath," was not only prompt and desirous to be reconciled, but exerted himself to make ample reparation.

Books of travels having been mentioned, Johnson praised Pennant very highly, as he did at Dunvegan, in the Isle of Sky [1]. Dr. Percy knowing himself to be the heir male of the ancient Percies [2], and having

[1] [See *ante*, vol. ii. p. 443.—ED.]

[2] See this accurately stated, and the descent of his family from the Earls of Northumberland clearly deduced in the Rev. Dr. Nash's excellent "History of Worcestershire," vol. ii. p. 318. The Doctor has subjoined a note, in which he says, "The editor hath seen, and carefully examined the proofs of all the particulars above-mentioned, now in the possession of the Rev. Thomas Percy." The same proofs I have also myself carefully examined, and have seen some additional proofs which have occurred since the doctor's book was published; and both as a lawyer accustomed to the consideration of evidence, and as a genealogist versed in the study of pedigrees, I am fully satisfied. I cannot help observing, as a circumstance of no small moment, that in tracing the Bishop of

the warmest and most dutiful attachment to the noble house of Northumberland, could not sit quietly and hear a man praised, who had spoken disrespectfully of Alnwick Castle and the duke's pleasure-grounds, especially as he thought meanly of his travels. He therefore opposed Johnson eagerly. JOHNSON. "Pennant, in what he has said of Alnwick, has done what he intended; he has made you very angry." PERCY. "He has said the garden is trim, which is representing it like a citizen's parterre, when the truth is, there is a very large extent of fine turf and gravel walks." JOHNSON. "According to your own account, sir, Pennant is right. It *is* trim. Here is grass cut close, and gravel rolled smooth. Is not that trim? The extent is nothing against that; a mile may be as trim as a square yard. Your extent puts me in mind of the citizen's enlarged dinner, two pieces of roast-beef, and two puddings [1]. There is no variety, no mind exerted in laying out the ground, no trees." PERCY. "He pretends to give the natural history of Northumberland, and yet takes no notice of the immense number of trees planted there of late." JOHNSON. "That, sir, has nothing to do with the *natural* history; that is *civil* history. A man who gives the

Dromore's genealogy, essential aid was given by the late Elizabeth Duchess of Northumberland, heiress of that illustrious house; a lady not only of high dignity of spirit, such as became her noble blood, but of excellent understanding and lively talents. With a fair pride I can boast of the honour of her grace's correspondence, specimens of which adorn my archives.—BOSWELL.

[1] [It is observable that the *same illustration* of the *same subject* is to be found in the *Heroick Epistle* to Sir William Chambers:

"For what is nature?—ring her changes round,
Her three fleet notes are water, plants, and ground;
Prolong the peal, yet spite of all your clatter,
The tedious chime is still ground, plants, and water.
So when some John his dull invention racks
To rival Boodle's dinners or Almack's,
Three uncouth legs of mutton shock our eyes,
Three roasted geese, three butter'd apple pies."

The *Heroick Epistle* had appeared in 1773; so that Johnson no doubt borrowed the idea from that spirited and pungent satire.—ED.]

natural history of the oak, is not to tell how many oaks have been planted in this place or that. A man who gives the natural history of the cow, is not to tell how many cows are milked at Islington. The animal is the same whether milked in the Park or at Islington." PERCY. "Pennant does not describe well; a carrier who goes along the side of Lochlomond would describe it better." JOHNSON. "I think he describes very well." PERCY. "I travelled after him." JOHNSON. "And *I* travelled after him." PERCY. "But, my good friend, you are short-sighted, and do not see so well as I do." I wondered at Dr. Percy's venturing thus. Dr. Johnson said nothing at the time; but inflammable particles were collecting for a cloud to burst. In a little while Dr. Percy said something more in disparagement of Pennant. JOHNSON (pointedly). "This is the resentment of a narrow mind, because he did not find every thing in Northumberland." PERCY (feeling the stroke). "Sir, you may be as rude as you please." JOHNSON. "Hold, sir! Don't talk of rudeness: remember, sir, you told me," puffing hard with passion struggling for a vent, "I was short-sighted. We have done with civility. We are to be as rude as we please." PERCY. "Upon my honour, sir, I did not mean to be uncivil." JOHNSON. "I cannot say so, sir; for I *did* mean to be uncivil, thinking *you* had been uncivil." Dr. Percy rose, ran up to him, and taking him by the hand, assured him affectionately that his meaning had been misunderstood; upon which a reconciliation instantly took place. JOHNSON. "My dear sir, I am willing you shall *hang* Pennant." PERCY (resuming the former subject). "Pennant complains that the helmet is not hung out to invite to the hall of hospitality. Now I never heard that

it was a custom to hang out a *helmet*[1]." JOHNSON. "Hang him up, hang him up." BOSWELL (humouring the joke). "Hang out his skull instead of a helmet, and you may drink ale out of it in your hall of Odin, as he is your enemy; that will be truly ancient. *There* will be 'Northern Antiquities[2].'" JOHNSON. "He's a *whig*, sir; a *sad dog*," smiling at his own violent expressions, merely for *political* difference of opinion: "but he's the best traveller I ever read; he observes more things than any one else does."

I could not help thinking that this was too high praise of a writer who traversed a wide extent of country in such haste, that he could put together only curt frittered fragments of his own, and afterwards procured supplemental intelligence from parochial ministers, and others not the best qualified or most partial narrators, whose ungenerous prejudice against the house of Stuart glares in misrepresentation; a writer, who at best treats merely of superficial objects, and shows no philosophical investigation of character and manners, such as Johnson has exhibited in his masterly "Journey" over part of the same ground; and who, it should seem from a desire of ingratiating himself with the Scotch, has flattered the people of North Britain so inordinately and with so little discrimination, that the judicious and candid amongst them must be disgusted, while they value more the plain, just, yet kindly report of Johnson.

Having impartially censured Mr. Pennant, as a Traveller in Scotland, let me allow him, from authorities much better than mine, his deserved praise

[1] It certainly was a custom, as appears from the following passage in "Perceforest, vol. iii. p. 108:—"Fasoient mettre au plus hault de leur hostel un *heaulme, en signe* que tous les gentils hommes et gentilles femmes entrassent hardiment en leur hostel comme en leur propre," &c.—KEARNEY. The author's second son, Mr. James Boswell, had noticed this passage in "Perceforest," and suggested to me the same remark.—MALONE.

[2] The title of a book translated by Dr. Percy.—BOSWELL.

as an able zoologist; and let me also, from my own understanding and feelings, acknowledge the merit of his "London," which, though said to be not quite accurate in some particulars, is one of the most pleasing topographical performances that ever appeared in any language. Mr. Pennant, like his countrymen in general, has the true spirit of a *gentleman*. As a proof of it, I shall quote from his "London" the passage in which he speaks of my illustrious friend.

"I must by no means omit *Bolt-court*, the long residence of Dr. Samuel Johnson, a man of the strongest natural abilities, great learning, a most retentive memory, of the deepest and most unaffected piety and morality, mingled with those numerous weaknesses and prejudices which his friends have kindly taken care to draw from their dread abode [1]. I brought on myself his transient anger, by observing that in his tour in Scotland, he once had long and woful experience of oats being the food of men in Scotland as they were of horses in England. It was a national reflection unworthy of him, and I shot my bolt. In turn he gave me a tender hug [2]. *Con amore* he also said of me, '*The dog is a whig* [3]. I admired the virtues of Lord Russel, and pitied his fall. I should have been a whig at the Revolution. There have been periods since in which I should have been, what I now am, a moderate tory, a supporter, as far as my little influence extends, of a well-poised balance between the crown and the people; but should the scale preponderate against the *salus populi*, that moment may it be said, '*The* dog's a *whig!*'"

We had a calm after the storm, staid the evening and supped, and were pleasant and gay. But Dr. Percy told me he was very uneasy at what had passed; for there was a gentleman there who was acquainted with the Northumberland family, to whom he hoped

[1] This is the common cant against faithful biography. Does the worthy gentleman mean that I, who was taught discrimination of character by Johnson, should have omitted his frailties, and, in short, have *bedawbed* him as the worthy gentleman has bedawbed Scotland?—BOSWELL.

[2] See Dr. Johnson's "Journey to the Western Islands," p. 296; see his Dictionary article, *oats;* and my "Voyage to the Hebrides," first edition.—PENNANT.

[3] Mr. Boswell's Journal, *ante*, vol. ii. p. 387.—PENNANT.

to have appeared more respectable, by showing how intimate he was with Dr. Johnson, and who might now, on the contrary, go away with an opinion to his disadvantage. He begged I would mention this to Dr. Johnson, which I afterwards did. His observation upon it was, "This comes of *stratagem;* had he told me that he wished to appear to advantage before that gentleman, he should have been at the top of the house all the time." He spoke of Dr. Percy in the handsomest manner. "Then, sir," said I, "may I be allowed to suggest a mode by which you may effectually counteract any unfavourable report of what passed? I will write a letter to you upon the subject of the unlucky contest of that day, and you will be kind enough to put in writing, as an answer to that letter, what you have now said, and as Lord Percy is to dine with us at General Paoli's soon, I will take an opportunity to read the correspondence in his lordship's presence." This friendly scheme was accordingly carried into execution without Dr. Percy's knowledge. Johnson's letter placed Dr. Percy's unquestionable merit in the fairest point of view; and I contrived that Lord Percy should hear the correspondence, by introducing it at General Paoli's as an instance of Dr. Johnson's kind disposition towards one in whom his lordship was interested. Thus every unfavourable impression was obviated that could possibly have been made on those by whom he wished most to be regarded. I breakfasted the day after with him, and informed him of my scheme, and its happy completion, for which he thanked me in the warmest terms, and was highly delighted with Dr. Johnson's letter in his praise, of which I gave him a copy. He said, "I would rather have this than degrees from all the universities in Europe. It will be for me, and my children and grandchildren."

Dr. Johnson having afterwards asked me if I had given him a copy of it, and being told I had, was offended, and insisted that I should get it back, which I did. As, however, he did not desire me to destroy either the original or the copy, or forbid me to let it be seen, I think myself at liberty to apply to it his general declaration to me concerning his own letters, "That he did not choose they should be published in his life-time; but had no objection to their appearing after his death." I shall therefore insert this kindly correspondence, having faithfully narrated the circumstances accompanying it.

"TO DR. SAMUEL JOHNSON.

"MY DEAR SIR,—I beg leave to address you in behalf of our friend Dr. Percy, who was much hurt by what you said to him that day we dined at his house[1]; when, in the course of the dispute as to Pennant's merit as a traveller, you told Percy that 'he had the resentment of a narrow mind against Pennant, because he did not find every thing in Northumberland.' Percy is sensible that you did not mean to injure him; but he is vexed to think that your behaviour to him on that occasion may be interpreted as a proof that he is despised by you, which I know is not the case. I have told him, that the charge of being narrow-minded was only as to the particular point in question; and that he had the merit of being a martyr to his noble family.

"Earl Percy is to dine with General Paoli next Friday; and I should be sincerely glad to have it in my power to satisfy his lordship how well you think of Dr. Percy, who, I find, apprehends that your good opinion of him may be of very essential consequence; and who assures me that he has the highest respect and the warmest affection for you.

"I have only to add, that my suggesting this occasion for the exercise of your candour and generosity is altogether unknown to Dr. Percy, and proceeds from my good-will towards him, and my persuasion that you will be happy to do him an essential kindness. I am, more and more, my dear sir, your most faithful and affectionate humble servant,

"JAMES BOSWELL."

[1] Sunday, April 12, 1778.—BOSWELL.

"TO JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

"23d April, 1778.

"SIR,—The debate between Dr. Percy and me is one of those foolish controversies which begin upon a question of which neither party cares how it is decided, and which is, nevertheless, continued to acrimony, by the vanity with which every man resists confutation. Dr. Percy's warmth proceeded from a cause which, perhaps, does him more honour than he could have derived from juster criticism. His abhorrence of Pennant proceeded from his opinion that Pennant had wantonly and indecently censured his patron. His anger made him resolve, that, for having been once wrong, he never should be right. Pennant has much in his notions that I do not like; but still I think him a very intelligent traveller. If Percy is really offended, I am sorry; for he is a man whom I never knew to offend any one. He is a man very willing to learn, and very able to teach; a man, out of whose company I never go without having learned something. It is sure that he vexes me sometimes, but I am afraid it is by making me feel my own ignorance. So much extension of mind, and so much minute accuracy of inquiry, if you survey your whole circle of acquaintance, you will find so scarce, if you find it at all, that you will value Percy by comparison. Lord Hailes is somewhat like him: but Lord Hailes does not, perhaps, go beyond him in research; and I do not know that he equals him in elegance. Percy's attention to poetry has given grace and splendour to his studies of antiquity. A mere antiquarian is a rugged being.

"Upon the whole, you see that what I might say in sport or petulance to him, is very consistent with full conviction of his merit. I am, dear sir, your most, &c. "SAM. JOHNSON."

"TO THE REV. DR. PERCY, NORTHUMBERLAND-HOUSE.

"South Audley-street, 25th April.

"DEAR SIR,—I wrote to Dr. Johnson on the subject of the *Pennantian* controversy; and have received from him an answer which will delight you. I read it yesterday to Dr. Robertson, at the Exhibition; and at dinner to Lord Percy, General Oglethorpe, &c. who dined with us at General Paoli's; who was also a witness to the high *testimony* to your honour.

"General Paoli desires the favour of your company next Tuesday to dinner, to meet Dr. Johnson. If I can, I will call

on you to-day. I am, with sincere regard, your most obedient humble servant, "JAMES BOSWELL[1]."

[It has been already stated[2], that there seems Ed. reason to doubt whether Johnson had any great regard or respect for Dr. Percy. The following anecdotes will throw some light on that subject. Mr. Cradock happened to be in London once when Dr. Percy returned from Northumberland, and found that he was expected to preach a charity sermon almost immediately; this had escaped his memory, and he said, that "though much fatigued, he had been obliged to sit up very late to furnish out something from former discourses; but suddenly recollecting that Johnson's fourth Idler was exactly to his purpose, he had freely engrafted the greatest part of it." He preached, and his discourse was much admired; but being requested to print it, he most strenuously opposed the honour intended him, till he was assured by the governors, that it was absolutely necessary, as the annual contributions greatly depended on the account that was given in the appendix. In this dilemma, he earnestly requested that Mr. Cradock would call upon Dr. Johnson, and state particulars. Mr. Cradock assented; and endeavoured to introduce the subject with all due solemnity; but Johnson was highly diverted with his recital, and, laughing, said, "Pray, sir, give my kind respects to Dr. Percy, and tell him, I desire he will do whatever he pleases in regard to my Idler; it is entirely at his service." Crad. Mem. p. 241.

But these days of friendly communication were, from various causes, speedily to pass away, and worse

[1] Though the Bishop of Dromore kindly answered the letters which I wrote to him, relative to Dr. Johnson's early history; yet, in justice to him, I think it proper to add, that the account of the foregoing conversation, and the subsequent transaction, as well as of some other conversations in which he is mentioned, has been given to the publick without previous communication with his lordship.—BOSWELL.

[2] [See vol. iii. p. 342.—ED.]

Crad. Mem. p. 241.

than indifference to succeed; for one morning Dr. Percy said to Mr. Cradock, "I have not seen Dr. Johnson for a long time. I believe I must just call upon him, and greatly wish that you would accompany me. I intend," said he, "to tease him a little about Gibbon's pamphlet[1]." "I hope not, Dr. Percy," was Cradock's reply. "Indeed I shall, for I have a great pleasure in combating his narrow prejudices." They went together; and Dr. Percy opened with some anecdotes from Northumberland-house; mentioned some rare books that were in the library; and then threw out that the town rang with applause of Gibbon's "Reply to Davis;" that the latter "had written before he had read," and that the two "confederate doctors," as Mr. Gibbon termed them, "had fallen into some strange errors."

Johnson said, he knew nothing of Davis's pamphlet, nor would he give him any answer as to Gibbon; but, if the "confederate doctors," as they were termed, had really made such mistakes, as he alluded to, they were blockheads.

Dr. Percy talked on in the most careless style possible, but in a very lofty tone; and Johnson appeared to be excessively angry. Mr. Cradock only wished to get released; for, if Dr. Percy had proceeded to inform him, that he had lately introduced Mr. Hume to dine at the king's chaplains' table, there must have been an "explosion."

Mr. Cradock possessed several letters which threw a full light on these unhappy differences; and with all his partiality for Dr. Johnson, Mr. Cradock freely declared, that he thought Dr. Percy had received very great cause to take real offence at Dr. Johnson, who, by a ludicrous parody on a stanza in the "Hermit of

[1] [Published in 1770.—ED.]

Warkworth," had rendered him contemptible. It was urged, that Johnson only meant to attack the metre; but he certainly turned the whole poem into ridicule. Crad. Mem. p. 241.

"I put my hat upon my head,
And walk'd into the Strand,
And there I met another man
With his hat in his hand."

Mr. Garrick, in the postscript of a letter to Mr. Cradock, soon afterwards asked him, "Whether he had seen Johnson's *criticism on the Hermit?* it is already," said he, "over half the town." Almost the last time that Mr. Cradock ever saw Johnson, he said to him, "Notwithstanding all the pains that Dr. Farmer and I took to serve Dr. Percy, in regard to his 'Ancient Ballads,' he has left town for Ireland [1], without taking leave of either of us."]

On Monday, April 13, I dined with Johnson at Mr. Langton's, where were Dr. Porteus, then Bishop of Chester, afterwards of London, and Dr. Stinton. He was at first in a very silent mood. Before dinner he said nothing but "Pretty baby," to one of the children. Langton said very well to me afterwards, that he could repeat Dr. Johnson's conversation before dinner, as Johnson had said that he could repeat a complete chapter of "The Natural History of Iceland," from the Danish of *Horrebow*, the whole of which was exactly thus:

"CHAP. LXXII.—*Concerning Snakes.*

"There are no snakes to be met with throughout the whole island."

At dinner we talked of another mode in the newspapers of giving modern characters in sentences from the classicks, and of the passage

[1] [Dr. Percy was made Bishop of Dromore in 1782.—ED.]

Hor. Od. i. 39.

"Parcus deorum cultor, et infrequens,
Insanientis dum sapientiæ
Consultus erro, nunc retrorsùm
Vela dare, atque iterare cursus
Cogor relictos,"

being well applied to Soame Jenyns; who, after having wandered in the wilds of infidelity, had returned to the Christian faith. Mr. Langton asked Johnson as to the propriety of *sapientiæ consultus*. JOHNSON. "Though *consultus* was primarily an adjective, like *amicus* it came to be used as a substantive. So we have *Juris consultus*, a consult in law."

We talked of the styles of different painters, and how certainly a connoisseur could distinguish them. I asked, if there was as clear a difference of styles in language as in painting, or even as in hand-writing, so that the composition of every individual may be distinguished? JOHNSON. "Yes. Those who have a style of eminent excellence, such as Dryden and Milton, can always be distinguished." I had no doubt of this; but what I wanted to know was, whether there was really a peculiar style to every man whatever, as there is certainly a peculiar hand-writing, a peculiar countenance, not widely different in many, yet always enough to be distinctive:

Ov. Met. 2. v. 3.

"——— facies non omnibus una,
Nec diversa tamen."——

The bishop thought not; and said, he supposed that many pieces in Dodsley's collection of poems, though all very pretty, had nothing appropriated in their style, and in that particular could not be at all distinguished. JOHNSON. "Why, sir, I think every man whatever has a peculiar style, which may be discovered by nice examination and comparison with others: but a man must write a great deal to

make his style obviously discernible. As logicians say, this appropriation of style is infinite *in potestate*, limited *in actu*."

Mr. Topham Beauclerk came in the evening, and he and Dr. Johnson and I staid to supper. It was mentioned that Dr. Dodd[1] had once wished to be a member of the LITERARY CLUB. JOHNSON. "I should be sorry if any of our Club were hanged. I will not say but some of them deserve it[2]." BEAUCLERK (supposing this to be aimed at persons[3] for whom he had at that time a wonderful fancy, which, however, did not last long) was irritated, and eagerly said, "You, sir, have a friend[4] (naming him) who deserves to be hanged; for he speaks behind their backs against those with whom he lives on the best terms, and attacks them in the newspapers. *He* certainly ought to be *kicked*." JOHNSON. "Sir, we all do this in some degree: '*Veniam petimus damusque vicissim*.' To be sure it may be done so much, that a man may deserve to be kicked." BEAU- Hor. Art. Poet. 11.

[1] [Miss Reynolds and Sir J. Hawkins doubted whether Johnson had ever been in Dodd's company; but Johnson told Boswell (*ante*, v. iii. p. 504.) that "he had once been." The editor has now before him a letter, dated in 1750, from Dr. Dodd to his friend the Rev. Mr. Parkhurst, the lexicographer, mentioning this meeting; and his account, at that day, of the man with whom he was afterward to have so painful a correspondence, is interesting and curious. "I spent yesterday afternoon with Johnson, the celebrated author of *The Rambler*, who is of all others the oddest and most peculiar fellow I ever saw. He is six feet high, has a violent convulsion in his head, and his eyes are distorted. He speaks roughly and loud, listens to no man's opinions, thoroughly pertinacious of his own. Good sense flows from him in all he utters, and he seems possessed of a prodigious fund of knowledge, which he is not at all reserved in communicating; but in a manner so obstinate, ungenteel, and boorish, as renders it disagreeable and dissatisfactory. In short, it is impossible for words to describe him. He seems often inattentive to what passes in company, and then looks like a person possessed by some superior spirit. I have been reflecting on him ever since I saw him. He is a man of most universal and surprising genius, but in himself particular beyond expression."—ED.]

[2] See note, vol. iii. p. 470.—BOSWELL.

[3] [Probably Mr. Fox, Lord Spencer, Mr. Burke, and some other whigs, the violence of whose *opposition* at this time seemed to Johnson little short of abetting *rebellion*, for which they "deserved to be hanged."—ED.]

[4] [No doubt George Steevens (now Johnson's colleague in editing Shakspeare), to whom such practices were imputed, and particularly as against Garrick and Mr. Arthur Murphy.—*Miss Hawk. Mem.* i. 39.—ED.]

CLERK. "He is very malignant." JOHNSON. "No, sir; he is not malignant. He is mischievous, if you will. He would do no man an essential injury; he may, indeed, love to make sport of people by vexing their vanity. I, however, once knew an old gentleman who was absolutely malignant. He really wished evil to others, and rejoiced at it." BOSWELL. "The gentleman, Mr. Beauclerk, against whom you are so violent, is, I know, a man of good principles." BEAUCLERK. "Then he does not wear them out in practice."

Dr. Johnson, who, as I have observed before, delighted in discrimination of character, and having a masterly knowledge of human nature, was willing to take men as they are, imperfect, and with a mixture of good and bad qualities, I suppose thought he had said enough in defence of his friend, of whose merits, notwithstanding his exceptionable points, he had a just value: and added no more on the subject.

On Tuesday, 14th April, I dined with him at General Oglethorpe's, with General Paoli and Mr. Langton. General Oglethorpe declaimed against luxury. JOHNSON. "Depend upon it, sir, every state of society is as luxurious as it can be. Men always take the best they can get." OGLETHORPE. "But the best depends much upon ourselves; and if we can be as well satisfied with plain things, we are in the wrong to accustom our palates to what is high-seasoned and expensive. What says Addison in his 'Cato,' speaking of the Numidian?

'Coarse are his meals, the fortune of the chase;
Amid the running stream he slakes his thirst,
Toils all the day, and at the approach of night,
On the first friendly bank he throws him down,
Or rests his head upon a rock till morn;
And if the following day he chance to find
A new repast, or an untasted spring,
Blesses his stars, and thinks it luxury.'

Let us have *that* kind of luxury, sir, if you will." JOHNSON. "But hold, sir; to be merely satisfied is not enough. It is in refinement and elegance that the civilized man differs from the savage. A great part of our industry, and all our ingenuity, is exercised in procuring pleasure; and, sir, a hungry man has not the same pleasure in eating a plain dinner, that a hungry man has in eating a luxurious dinner. You see I put the case fairly. A hungry man may have as much, nay, more pleasure in eating a plain dinner, than a man grown fastidious has in eating a luxurious dinner. But I suppose the man who decides between the two dinners to be equally a hungry man."

Talking of the different governments,—JOHNSON. "The more contracted power is, the more easily it is destroyed. A country governed by a despot is an inverted cone. Government there cannot be so firm as when it rests upon a broad basis gradually contracted, as the government of Great Britain, which is founded on the parliament, then is in the privy council, then in the king." BOSWELL. "Power, when contracted into the person of a despot, may be easily destroyed, as the prince may be cut off. So Caligula wished that the people of Rome had but one neck, that he might cut them off at a blow." OGLETHORPE. "It was of the senate he wished that [1]. The senate by its usurpation controlled both the emperour and the people. And don't you think that we see too much of that in our own parliament?"

Dr. Johnson endeavoured to trace the etymology of Maccaronick verses, which he thought were of Italian invention, from Maccaroni; but on being informed that this would infer that they were the most

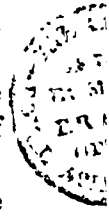
[1 Boswell was right, and Oglethorpe wrong; the exclamation in Suetonius is, "Utinam *populus* Romanus unam cervicem haberet." *Calig.* XXX.—ED.]

common and easy verses, maccaroni being the most ordinary and simple food, he was at a loss; for he said, "He rather should have supposed it to import in its primitive signification, a composition of several things[1]; for Maccaronick verses are verses made out of a mixture of different languages, that is, of one language with the termination of another." I suppose we scarcely know of a language in any country, where there is any learning, in which that motley ludicrous species of composition may not be found. It is particularly droll in Low Dutch. The "*Polemo-middinia*" of Drummond, of Hawthornden, in which there is a jumble of many languages moulded, as if it were all in Latin, is well known. Mr. Langton made us laugh heartily at one in the Grecian mould, by Joshua Barnes, in which are to be found such comical *Anglo-hellenisms* as κλυβεοισιν εβανχθεν: they were banged with clubs.

On Wednesday, 15th April, I dined with Dr. Johnson at Mr. Dilly's, and was in high spirits, for I had been a good part of the morning with Mr. Orme, the able and eloquent historian of Hindostan, who expressed a great admiration of Johnson. "I do not care," said he, "on what subject Johnson talks; but I love better to hear him talk than any body. He either gives you new thoughts, or a new colouring. It is a shame to the nation that he has not been more liberally rewarded. Had I been George the Third, and thought as he did about America, I would have given Johnson three hundred a year for his

[1] Dr. Johnson was right in supposing that this kind of poetry derived its name from *macchерone*. "Ars ista poetica (says Merlin Coccaie, whose true name was Theophilo Folengo) nuncupatur ars macaronica, a *macaronibus* derivata; qui *macarones* sunt quoddam pulmentum, farina, caseo, butyro compaginatum, grossum, rude, et rusticanum. Ideo macaronica nil nisi grossedinem, ruditatem, et vocabulazzos debet in se continere." Warton's Hist. of Eng. Poet. ii. 357. Folengo's assumed name was taken up in consequence of his having been instructed in his youth by Virago Coccaio. He died in 1544. —MALONE.

'Taxation no Tyranny,' alone." I repeated this, and Johnson was much pleased with such praise from such a man as Orme.



At Mr. Dilly's to-day were Mrs. Knowles[1], the ingenious quaker lady, Miss Seward the poetess of Lichfield, the Reverend Dr. Mayo, and the Rev. Mr. Beresford, tutor to the Duke of Bedford. Before dinner Dr. Johnson seized upon Mr. Charles Sheridan's[2] "Account of the late Revolution in Sweden," and seemed to read it ravenously, as if he devoured it, which was to all appearance his method of studying. "He knows how to read better than any one," says Mrs. Knowles; "he gets at the substance of a book directly; he tears out the heart of it." He kept it wrapt up in the tablecloth in his lap during the time of dinner, from an avidity to have one entertainment in readiness, when he should have finished another; resembling (if I may use so coarse a simile) a dog who holds a bone in his paws in reserve, while he eats something else which has been thrown to him.

The subject of cookery having been very naturally introduced at a table where Johnson, who boasted of the niceness of his palate, owned that "he always found a good dinner," he said "I could write a better book of cookery than has ever yet been written; it should be a book upon philosophical principles. Pharmacy is now made much more simple. Cookery may be made so too. A prescription which is now compounded of five ingredients, had formerly fifty in it. So in cookery, if the nature of the ingredients be well known, much fewer will do. Then, as you cannot make bad meat good, I would tell what is the best butcher's meat, the best beef, the best pieces;

[1] [See *ante*, v. iii. p. 440.—ED.]

[2] The elder brother of Mr. Richard Brinsley Sheridan. He died in 1806.—MALONE.

how to choose young fowls; the proper seasons of different vegetables; and then how to roast and boil and compound." DILLY. "Mrs. Glasse's 'Cookery,' which is the best, was written by Dr. Hill. Half the *trade*[1] know this." JOHNSON. "Well, sir. This shows how much better the subject of cookery may be treated by a philosopher. I doubt if the book be written by Dr. Hill; for, in Mrs. Glasse's 'Cookery,' which I have looked into, salt-petre and sal-prunella are spoken of as different substances, whereas sal-prunella is only salt-petre burnt on charcoal; and Hill could not be ignorant of this. However, as the greatest part of such a book is made by transcription, this mistake may have been carelessly adopted. But you shall see what a book of cookery I shall make: I shall agree with Mr. Dilly for the copy-right." MISS SEWARD. "That would be Hercules with the distaff indeed." JOHNSON. "No, madam. Women can spin very well; but they cannot make a good book of cookery."

JOHNSON. "O! Mr. Dilly—you must know that an English Benedictine monk[2] at Paris has translated 'The Duke of Berwick's Memoirs,' from the original French, and has sent them to me to sell. I offered them to Strahan, who sent them back with this answer;—'That the first book he had published was the Duke of Berwick's Life, by which he had lost: and he hated the name.' Now I honestly tell you that Strahan has refused them; but I also honestly tell you that he did it upon no principle, for he never looked into them." DILLY. "Are they well translated, sir?" JOHNSON. "Why, sir, very well; in a

[1] As physicians are called *the faculty*, and counsellors at law *the profession*, the booksellers of London are denominated *the trade*. Johnson disapproved of these denominations.—BOSWELL.

[2] [The Abbé Hook. They were published, in 1779, by Cadell.—MACKINTOSH.]

style very current and clear. I have written to the Benedictine to give me an answer upon two points. What evidence is there that the letters are authentick? (for if they are not authentick, they are nothing). And how long will it be before the original French is published? For if the French edition is not to appear for a considerable time, the translation will be almost as valuable as an original book. They will make two volumes in octavo; and I have undertaken to correct every sheet as it comes from the press." Mr. Dilly desired to see them, and said he would send for them. He asked Dr. Johnson if he would write a preface to them. JOHNSON. "No, sir. The Benedictines were very kind to me, and I'll do what I undertook to do; but I will not mingle my name with them. I am to gain nothing by them. I'll turn them loose upon the world, and let them take their chance." DR. MAYO. "Pray, sir, are Ganganelli's letters authentick?" JOHNSON. "No, sir. Voltaire put the same question to the editor of them that I did to Macpherson—Where are the originals?"

Mrs. Knowles affected to complain that men had much more liberty allowed them than women. JOHNSON. "Why, madam, women have all the liberty they should wish to have. We have all the labour and the danger, and the women all the advantage. We go to sea, we build houses, we do every thing, in short, to pay our court to the women." MRS. KNOWLES. "The doctor reasons very wittily, but not convincingly. Now, take the instance of building; the mason's wife, if she is ever seen in liquor, is ruined: the mason may get himself drunk as often as he pleases, with little loss of character; nay, may let his wife and children starve." JOHNSON. "Madam, you must consider, if the mason does

get himself drunk, and let his wife and children starve, the parish will oblige him to find security for their maintenance. We have different modes of restraining evil. Stocks for the men, a ducking-stool for women, and a pound for beasts. If we require more perfection from women than from ourselves, it is doing them honour. And women have not the same temptations that we have; they may always live in virtuous company; men must mix in the world indiscriminately. If a woman has no inclination to do what is wrong, being secured from it is no restraint to her. I am at liberty to walk into the Thames; but if I were to try it, my friends would restrain me in Bedlam, and I should be obliged to them." MRS. KNOWLES. "Still, doctor, I cannot help thinking it a hardship that more indulgence is allowed to men than to women. It gives a superiority to men, to which I do not see how they are entitled." JOHNSON. "It is plain, madam, one or other must have the superiority. As Shakspeare says, 'If two men ride on a horse, one must ride behind.'" DILLY. "I suppose, sir, Mrs. Knowles would have them ride in panniers, one on each side." JOHNSON. "Then, sir, the horse would throw them both." MRS. KNOWLES. "Well, I hope that in another world the sexes will be equal." BOSWELL. "That is being too ambitious, madam. *We* might as well desire to be equal with the angels. We shall all, I hope, be happy in a future state, but we must not expect to be all happy in the same degree. It is enough, if we be happy according to our several capacities. A worthy carman will get to heaven as well as Sir Isaac Newton. Yet, though equally good, they will not have the same degrees of happiness." JOHNSON. "Probably not[1]."

[1] See on this question Bishop Hall's Epistles, dec. iii. epist. 6. "Of the

Upon this subject I had once before sounded him by mentioning the late Reverend Mr. Brown of Utrecht's image; that a great and small glass, though equally full, did not hold an equal quantity; which he threw out to refute David Hume's saying, that a little miss, going to dance at a ball, in a fine new dress, was as happy as a great oratour, after having made an eloquent and applauded speech. After some thought, Johnson said, "I come over to the parson." As an instance of coincidence of thinking, Mr. Dilly told me, that Dr. King, a late dissenting minister in London, said to him, upon the happiness in a future state of good men of different capacities, "A pail does not hold so much as a tub; but, if it be equally full, it has no reason to complain. Every saint in heaven will have as much happiness as he can hold." Mr. Dilly thought this a clear, though a familiar, illustration of the phrase, "One star differeth from another in brightness." 1 Cor. xv. 41.

Dr. Mayo having asked Johnson's opinion of Soame Jenyns's "View of the Internal Evidence of the Christian Religion"—JOHNSON. "I think it a pretty book; not very theological indeed; and there seems to be an affectation of ease and carelessness, as if it were not suitable to his character to be very serious about the matter." BOSWELL. "He may have intended this to introduce his book the better among genteel people, who might be unwilling to read too grave a treatise. There is a general levity in the age. We have physicians now with bag-wigs; may we not have airy divines, at least somewhat less solemn in their appearance than they used to be?" JOHNSON. "Jenyns might mean as you say." BOSWELL. "*You* should like his book, Mrs. Knowles, as

different degrees of heavenly glory, and of our mutual knowledge of each other above;" and vol. ii. p. 7, where also this subject is discussed.—MALONE.

it maintains, as you *friends* do, that courage is not a christian virtue." MRS. KNOWLES. "Yes, indeed, I like him there; but I cannot agree with him that friendship is not a christian virtue." JOHNSON. "Why, madam, strictly speaking, he is right. All friendship is preferring the interest of a friend, to the neglect, or, perhaps, against the interest, of others; so that an old Greek said, 'He that has *friends* has *no friend*[1].' Now Christianity recommends universal benevolence; to consider all men as our brethren; which is contrary to the virtue of friendship, as described by the ancient philosophers. Surely, madam, your sect must approve of this; for you call all men *friends*." MRS. KNOWLES. "We are commanded to do good to all men, 'but especially to them who are of the household of faith.'" JOHNSON. "Well, madam; the household of faith is wide enough." MRS. KNOWLES. "But, doctor, our Saviour had twelve apostles, yet there was *one* whom he *loved*. John was called 'the disciple whom Jesus loved.'" JOHNSON (with eyes sparkling benignantly). "Very well, indeed, madam. You have said very well." BOSWELL. "A fine application. Pray, sir, had you ever thought of it?" JOHNSON. "I had not, sir."

From this pleasing subject, he, I know not how or why, made a sudden transition to one upon which he was a violent aggressor; for he said, "I am willing to love all mankind, *except an American*;" and his inflammable corruption bursting into horrid fire, he "breathed out threatenings and slaughter[2];" calling them "rascals, robbers, pirates;" and ex-

[1] [Οἱ φιλοι, ου φιλοι, a phrase frequently quoted by Dr. Johnson.—ED.]

[2] [What have Sir J. Hawkins and Mrs. Piozzi ever related or characterized in such violent terms as Mr. Boswell here uses? violent, indeed, to the extent of being almost unintelligible. What means "his *inflammable corruption bursting into horrid fire*?"—ED.]

claiming, he'd "burn and destroy them." Miss Seward, looking to him with mild but steady astonishment, said, "Sir, this is an instance that we are always most violent against those whom we have injured." He was irritated still more by this delicate and keen reproach; and roared out another tremendous volley, which one might fancy could be heard across the Atlantick. During this tempest I sat in great uneasiness, lamenting his heat of temper, till, by degrees, I diverted his attention to other topicks.

DR. MAYO (to Dr. Johnson). "Pray, sir, have you read Edwards, of New England, on Grace?" JOHNSON. "No, sir." BOSWELL. "It puzzled me so much as to the freedom of the human will, by stating, with wonderful acute ingenuity, our being actuated by a series of motives which we cannot resist, that the only relief I had was to forget it." MAYO. "But he makes the proper distinction between moral and physical necessity." BOSWELL. "Alas! sir, they come both to the same thing. You may be bound as hard by chains when covered by leather, as when the iron appears. The argument for the moral necessity of human actions is always, I observe, fortified by supposing universal prescience to be one of the attributes of the Deity." JOHNSON. "You are surer that you are free, than you are of prescience; you are surer that you can lift up your finger or not as you please, than you are of any conclusion from a deduction of reasoning. But let us consider a little the objection from prescience. It is certain I am either to go home to-night or not; that does not prevent my freedom." BOSWELL. "That it is certain you are *either* to go home or not, does not prevent your freedom: because the liberty of choice between the two is compatible with that certainty. But if *one* of these events be certain *now*,

you have no *future* power of volition. If it be certain you are to go home to-night, you *must* go home." JOHNSON. "If I am well acquainted with a man, I can judge with great probability how he will act in any case, without his being restrained by my judging. God may have this probability increased to certainty[1]." BOSWELL. "When it is increased to *certainty*, freedom ceases, because that cannot be certainly foreknown which is not certain at the time; but if it be certain at the time, it is a contradiction in terms to maintain that there can be afterwards any *contingency* dependent upon the exercise of will or any thing else." JOHNSON. "All theory is against the freedom of the will; all experience for it." I did not push the subject any farther. I was glad to find him so mild in discussing a question of the most abstract nature, involved with theological tenets which he generally would not suffer to be in any degree opposed[2].

He, as usual, defended luxury: "You cannot spend money in luxury without doing good to the poor. Nay, you do more good to them by spending it in luxury; you make them exert industry, whereas by giving it you keep them idle. I own, indeed, there may be more virtue in giving it immediately in charity, than in spending it in luxury; though there may be pride in that too." Miss Seward asked, if this was not Mandeville's doctrine of "private vices

[1] [This seems a very loose report. Dr. Johnson never could have talked of "GOD's having *probability* increased to *certainty*." To the Eternal and Infinite Creator there can be neither *probability* nor *futurity*. The action which is *future* to mortals is only a point of eternity in the eye of the ALMIGHTY, and it and all the motives that led to it are and were from all eternity *present* to HIM. Our bounded intellects cannot comprehend the *prescience* of the Deity; but if that attribute be conceded, there seems no difficulty in reconciling it with our own *free agency*; for God *has* already *seen* what man *will choose* to do.—ED.]

[2] If any of my readers are disturbed by this thorny question, I beg leave to recommend to them Letter 69 of Montesquieu's *Lettres Persannes*, and the late Mr. John Palmer of Islington's Answer to Dr. Priestley's mechanical arguments for what he absurdly calls "philosophical necessity."—BOSWELL.

publick benefits." JOHNSON. "The fallacy of that book is, that Mandeville defines neither vices nor benefits. He reckons among vices every thing that gives pleasure. He takes the narrowest system of morality, monastick morality, which holds pleasure itself to be a vice, such as eating salt with our fish, because it makes it eat better; and he reckons wealth as a publick benefit, which is by no means always true. Pleasure of itself is not a vice. Having a garden, which we all know to be perfectly innocent, is a great pleasure. At the same time, in this state of being there are many pleasures vices, which however are so immediately agreeable that we can hardly abstain from them. The happiness of heaven will be, that pleasure and virtue will be perfectly consistent. Mandeville puts the case of a man who gets drunk at an alehouse; and says it is a public benefit, because so much money is got by it to the publick. But it must be considered, that all the good gained by this, through the gradation of alehouse-keeper, brewer, maltster, and farmer, is overbalanced by the evil caused to the man and his family by his getting drunk. This is the way to try what is vicious, by ascertaining whether more evil than good is produced by it upon the whole, which is the case in all vice. It may happen that good is produced by vice, but not as vice; for instance, a robber may take money from its owner, and give it to one who will make a better use of it. Here is good produced; but not by the robbery as robbery, but as translation of property. I read Mandeville forty or, I believe, fifty years ago[1]. He did not puzzle me; he opened my views into real life very much. No, it is clear that the happiness of society depends on virtue. In Sparta, theft was

[1] [See *ante*, v. ii. p. 96.—ED.]

allowed by general consent; theft, therefore, was *there* not a crime, but then there was no security; and what a life must they have had, when there was no security! Without truth there must be a dissolution of society. As it is, there is so little truth, that we are almost afraid to trust to our ears; but how should we be, if falsehood were multiplied ten times! Society is held together by communication and information; and I remember this remark of Sir Thomas Brown's, 'Do the devils lie? No; for then hell could not subsist.'"

Talking of Miss ——[1], a literary lady, he said, "I was obliged to speak to Miss Reynolds, to let her know that I desired she would not flatter me so much." Somebody now observed, "She flatters Garrick." JOHNSON. "She is in the right to flatter Garrick. She is in the right for two reasons; first, because she has the world with her, who have been praising Garrick these thirty years; and secondly, because she is rewarded for it by Garrick. Why should she flatter *me?* I can do nothing for her. Let her carry her praise to a better market." Then turning to Mrs. Knowles, "You, madam, have been flattering me all the evening; I wish you would give Boswell a little now. If you knew his merit as well as I do, you would say a great deal; he is the best travelling companion in the world."

Somebody mentioned the Reverend Mr. Mason's prosecution of Mr. Murray, the bookseller[2], for having inserted in a collection of "Gray's Poems" only fifty lines, of which Mr. Mason had still the exclusive property, under the statute of Queen Anne; and that Mr. Mason had persevered, notwithstanding his being

[1] [Hannah More.—*Malone MS.*—ED.]

[2] [Mr. Murray was a spirited and intelligent bookseller, the father of the publisher of this work.—ED.]

requested to name his own terms of compensation [1]. Johnson signified his displeasure at Mr. Mason's conduct very strongly; but added, by way of showing that he was not surprised at it, "Mason's a whig." MRS. KNOWLES (not hearing distinctly). "What! a prig, sir?" JOHNSON. "Worse, madam; a whig! But he is both!"

I expressed a horrour at the thought of death. MRS. KNOWLES. "Nay, thou shouldst not have a horrour for what is the gate of life." JOHNSON (standing upon the hearth, rolling about, with a serious, solemn, and somewhat gloomy air). "No rational man can die without uneasy apprehension." MRS. KNOWLES. "The Scriptures tell us, 'The righteous shall have *hope* in his death.'" JOHNSON. "Yes, madam, that is, he shall not have despair. But, consider, his hope of salvation must be founded on the terms on which it is promised that the mediation of our Saviour shall be applied to us,—namely, obedience; and where obedience has failed, then, as suppletory to it, repentance. But what man can say that his obedience has been such, as he would approve of in another, or even in himself upon close examination, or that his repentance has not been such as to require being repented of? No man can be sure that his obedience and repentance will obtain salvation." MRS. KNOWLES. "But divine intimation of acceptance may be made to the soul." JOHNSON. "Madam, it may; but I should not think the better of a man who should tell me on his death-bed, he was sure of salvation. A man cannot be sure himself that he has divine intimation of acceptance: much less can he make others sure that he has it." BOSWELL. "Then, sir, we must be contented to acknowledge that death is a terrible thing."

[1] See "A Letter to W. Mason, A.M. from J. Murray, bookseller in London," second edition, p. 20.—BOSWELL.

JOHNSON. "Yes, sir. I have made no approaches to a state which can look on it as not terrible." MRS. KNOWLES (seeming to enjoy a pleasing serenity in the persuasion of benignant divine light). "Does not St. Paul say, 'I have fought the good fight of faith, I have finished my course; henceforth is laid up for me a crown of life?'" JOHNSON. "Yes, madam; but here was a man inspired, a man who had been converted by supernatural interposition." BOSWELL. "In prospect death is dreadful; but in fact we find that people die easy." JOHNSON. "Why, sir, most people have not *thought* much of the matter, so cannot *say* much, and it is supposed they die easy. Few believe it certain they are then to die; and those who do set themselves to behave with resolution[1], as a man does who is going to be hanged;—he is not the less unwilling to be hanged." MISS SEWARD. "There is one mode of the fear of death, which is certainly absurd; and that is the dread of annihilation, which is only a pleasing sleep without a dream." JOHNSON. "It is neither pleasing nor sleep; it is nothing. Now mere existence is so much better than nothing, that one would rather exist even in pain, than not exist." BOSWELL. "If annihilation be nothing, then existing in pain is not a comparative state, but is a positive evil, which I cannot think we should choose. I must be allowed to differ here, and it would lessen the hope of a future state founded on the argument, that the Supreme Being, who is good as he is great, will hereafter compensate for our present sufferings in this life. For if existence, such as we have it here, be comparatively a good, we have no reason to complain, though no more of it should be given to us. But if our only state of existence were in this

[1] [See *ante*, v. ii. p. 412, where Paoli assumes that they are thinking of something else.—ED.]

world, then we might with some reason complain that we are so dissatisfied with our enjoyments compared with our desires." JOHNSON. "The lady confounds annihilation, which is nothing, with the apprehension of it, which is dreadful. It is in the apprehension of it that the horrour of annihilation consists."

Of John Wesley, he said, "He can talk well on any subject." BOSWELL. "Pray, sir, what has he made of his story of a ghost?" JOHNSON. "Why, sir, he believes it; but not on sufficient authority. He did not take time enough to examine the girl. It was at Newcastle where the ghost was said to have appeared to a young woman several times, mentioning something about the right to an old house, advising application to be made to an attorney, which was done; and at the same time, saying the attorney would do nothing, which proved to be the fact. 'This,' says John, 'is a proof that a ghost knows our thoughts.' Now," laughing, "it is not necessary to know our thoughts, to tell that an attorney will sometimes do nothing. Charles Wesley, who is a more stationary man, does not believe the story. I am sorry that John did not take more pains to inquire into the evidence for it." MISS SEWARD (with an incredulous smile). "What, sir! about a ghost!" JOHNSON (with solemn vehemence). "Yes, madam; this is a question which, after five thousand years, is yet undecided; a question, whether in theology or philosophy, one of the most important that can come before the human understanding."

Mrs. Knowles mentioned, as a proselyte to Quakerism, Miss —— ——[1], a young lady well known

[1] [Jane Harry. She was the illegitimate daughter, by a mulatto woman, of what Miss Seward calls (*Lett.* 1. 97) a *planter in the East* Indies, but in truth of a West Indian, who sent her over to England for her education. At the friend's house where she resided, Mrs. Knowles was a frequent visiter; and by degrees she converted this inexperienced and probably not very wise young

to Dr. Johnson, for whom he had shown much affection; while she ever had, and still retained, a great respect for him. Mrs. Knowles at the same time took an opportunity of letting him know "that the amiable young creature was sorry at finding that he was offended at her leaving the church of England, and embracing a simpler faith;" and, in the gentlest and most persuasive manner, solicited his kind indulgence for what was sincerely a matter of conscience. JOHNSON (frowning very angrily). "Madam, she is an odious wench. She could not have any proper conviction that it was her duty to change her religion, which is the most important of all subjects, and should be studied with all care, and with all the helps we can get. She knew no more of the church which she left, and that which she embraced, than she did of the difference between the Copernican and Ptolemaick systems." MRS. KNOWLES. "She had the New Testament before her." JOHNSON. "Madam, she could not understand the New Testament, the most difficult book in the world, for which the study of a life is required." MRS. KNOWLES. "It is clear as to essentials." JOHNSON. "But not as to controversial points. The heathens were easily converted, because they had nothing to give up; but we ought not, without very strong conviction indeed, to desert the religion in which we have been educated. That is the religion given you, the religion in which it may be said Providence has placed you. If you live conscientiously in that religion, you may be safe.

creature to Quakerism. Miss Seward, with more than her usual inaccuracy, has made a romantic history of this lady; and, amongst other fables, states that she sacrificed a fortune of 100,000*l.* by her conscientious conversion. Mr. Markland has been so kind as to put into the editor's hands evidence from a highly respectable member of the father's family, which proves that Jane Harry's fortune was but 1000*l.*; and so little was her father displeased at her conversion, that he rather approved of it, and gave her 1000*l.* more. So vanishes another of Miss Seward's romances.—ED.]

But errour is dangerous indeed, if you err when you choose a religion for yourself." MRS. KNOWLES. "Must we then go by implicit faith?" JOHNSON. "Why, madam, the greatest part of our knowledge is implicit faith; and as to religion, have we heard all that a disciple of Confucius, all that a Mahometan, can say for himself?" He then rose again into passion, and attacked the young proselyte in the severest terms of reproach, so that both the ladies seemed to be much shocked [1].

[1] Mrs. Knowles, not satisfied with the fame of her needle-work, the "*futile pictures*" mentioned by Johnson, in which she has indeed displayed much dexterity, nay, with the fame of reasoning better than women generally do, as I have fairly shown her to have done, communicated to me a dialogue of considerable length, which, after many years had elapsed, she wrote down as having passed between Dr. Johnson and her at this interview. As I had not the least recollection of it, and did not find the smallest trace of it in my "record" taken at the time, I could not, in consistency with my firm regard to authenticity, insert it in my work. It has, however, been published in "The Gentleman's Magazine" for June, 1791 [v. lxi. p. 500]. It chiefly relates to the principles of the sect called Quakers; and no doubt the lady appears to have greatly the advantage of Dr. Johnson in argument, as well as expression. From what I have now stated, and from the internal evidence of the paper itself, any one who may have the curiosity to peruse it will judge whether it was wrong in me to reject it, however willing to gratify Mrs. Knowles.—BOSWELL. [Mrs. Knowles, to her own account of this conversation was desirous of adding Miss Seward's testimony; and Miss Seward, who had by this time become exceedingly hostile to Johnson's memory, and was a great admirer of Mrs. Knowles, was not unwilling to gratify her. She accordingly communicated to Mrs. Knowles her notes of the conversation (*Lett.* 6. 97), which, it may be fairly presumed, were not too partial to Johnson. But they nevertheless did not satisfy the fair disputant, who, as Miss Seward complains (*Lett.* 2. 179), was "curiously dissatisfied with them, because they did not contain all that had passed, and as *exhibiting her in a poor eclipsed light;*" and it is amusing to observe, that—except on the words "*odious wench*" at the outset, in which all three accounts agree, and the words "*I never desire to meet fools anywhere,*" with which the ladies agree that the conversation ended—there is little accordance between them. Had they been content to say that the violence of Johnson was a disagreeable contrast to the quiet reasoning of the fair Quaker, they would probably have said no more than the truth; but when they affect to give the precise dialogue in the *very words* of the speakers, and yet do not agree in almost any one expression or sentiment—when neither preserve a word of what Mr. Boswell reports—and when both (but particularly Mrs. Knowles) attribute to Johnson the poorest and feeblest trash—we may be forgiven for rejecting both as fabulous, and the rather because Mr. Boswell's note was written on the instant ("his custom ever in the afternoon"), while those of the ladies seem to have been made up many years after the event. It may however be suspected that Boswell was himself a little ashamed of Johnson's violence, for he evidently slurs over the latter part of the conversation. But in the doctor's behalf it should be recollected that he had taken a great and affectionate interest in this young creature, who had, as he feared, not only endangered her spiritual welfare, but offended her friends, and forfeited her fortune; and that he was forced into the discussion by the very person by whose unauthorized and un-

We remained together till it was pretty late. Notwithstanding occasional explosions of violence, we were all delighted upon the whole with Johnson. I compared him at this time to a warm West Indian climate, where you have a bright sun, quick vegetation, luxuriant foliage, luscious fruits; but where the same heat sometimes produces thunder, lightning, and earthquakes in a terrible degree.

April 17, being Good-Friday, I waited on Johnson, as usual. I observed at breakfast that although it was a part of his abstemious discipline, on this most solemn fast, to take no milk in his tea, yet when Mrs. Desmoulins inadvertently poured it in, he did not reject it. I talked of the strange indecision of mind, and imbecility in the common occurrences of life, which we may observe in some people. JOHNSON. "Why, sir, I am in the habit of getting others to do things for me." BOSWELL. "What, sir! have you that weakness?" JOHNSON. "Yes, sir. But I always think afterwards I should have done better for myself."

I told him that at a gentleman's house where there was thought to be such extravagance or bad management, that he was living much beyond his income, his lady[1] had objected to the cutting of a pickled

derhand interference so much mischief (as he considered it) had been done.—Long as this note is, it must be added, that it appears in another part of Miss Seward's correspondence (vol. ii. p. 383), that when a young Quaker lady married a member of the church of England, Mrs. Knowles did not hesitate to designate *her* as *an* APOSTATE, although she had not quitted her sect, but only married one who did not belong to it.—ED.]

[1] [We learn from Miss Hawkins (*Mem.* ii. 282), what might have been guessed from several other passages, that the gentleman and lady here alluded to were Mr. Langton and Lady Rothes. She goes on to say, that "the anecdote not having a shadow of truth in it but the presence of the mango at table, Lady Rothes, who knew the slander to be aimed at herself, asked Boswell how he could put together such a falsity. He replied, affecting the tone of Johnson, 'Why, madam, it is no more than is done by landscape painters; the landscape is from nature, and they put a tree in the foreground as an embellishment.'" As Miss Hawkins could have heard Boswell's confession only at *second-hand*, we may, without questioning *her* veracity, be permitted to disbelieve it altogether. Boswell never could have made any such admission.—ED.]

mango, and that I had taken an opportunity to ask the price of it, and found it was only two shillings; so here was a very poor saving. JOHNSON. "Sir, that is the blundering economy of a narrow understanding. It is stopping one hole in a sieve."

I expressed some inclination to publish an account of my travels upon the continent of Europe, for which I had a variety of materials collected. JOHNSON. "I do not say, sir, you may not publish your travels; but I give you my opinion, that you would lessen yourself by it. What can you tell of countries so well known as those upon the continent of Europe, which you have visited?" BOSWELL. "But I can give an entertaining narrative, with many incidents, anecdotes, *jeux d'esprit*, and remarks, so as to make very pleasant reading." JOHNSON. "Why, sir, most modern travellers in Europe who have published their travels have been laughed at: I would not have you added to the number[1]. The world is now not contented to be merely entertained by a traveller's narrative; they want to learn something. Now some of my friends asked me, why I did not give some account of my travels in France. The reason is plain; intelligent readers had seen more of France than I had. *You* might have liked my travels in France, and THE CLUB might have liked them; but, upon the whole, there would have been more ridicule than good produced by them." BOSWELL. "I cannot agree with you, sir. People would like to read what you say of any thing. Suppose a face has been painted by fifty painters before; still we love to see it done by Sir Joshua." JOHNSON. "True, sir; but Sir Joshua cannot paint a face when he has not

[1] I believe, however, I shall follow my own opinion; for the world has shown a very flattering partiality to my writings, on many occasions.—BOSWELL.

time to look on it." BOSWELL. "Sir, a sketch of any sort by him is valuable. And, sir, to talk to you in your own style (raising my voice, and shaking my head), you *should* have given us your travels in France. I am *sure* I am right, and *there's an end on 't.*"

I said to him that it was certainly true, as my friend Dempster had observed in his letter to me upon the subject, that a great part of what was in his "Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland" had been in his mind before he left London. JOHNSON. "Why, yes, sir, the topicks were; and books of travels will be good in proportion to what a man has previously in his mind; his knowing what to observe; his power of contrasting one mode of life with another. As the Spanish proverb says, 'He who would bring home the wealth of the Indies must carry the wealth of the Indies with him.' So it is in travelling; a man must carry knowledge with him, if he would bring home knowledge." BOSWELL. "The proverb, I suppose, sir, means, he must carry a large stock with him to trade with." JOHNSON. "Yes, sir."

It was a delightful day; as we walked to St. Clement's church, I again remarked that Fleet-street was the most cheerful scene in the world. "Fleet-street," said I, "is in my mind more delightful than Tempé." JOHNSON. "Ay, sir, but let it be compared with Mull!"

There was a very numerous congregation to-day at St. Clement's church, which Dr. Johnson said he observed with pleasure.

And now I am to give a pretty full account of one of the most curious incidents in Johnson's life, of which he himself has made the following minute on this day:

"In my return from church, I was accosted by Edwards[1], an old fellow-collegian, who had not seen me since 1729[2]. He knew me, and asked if I remembered one Edwards; I did not at first recollect the name, but gradually, as we walked along, recovered it, and told him a conversation that had passed at an alehouse between us. My purpose is to continue our acquaintance." Prayers & Med. p. 4. 164.

It was in Butcher-row that this meeting happened. Mr. Edwards, who was a decent-looking, elderly man, in gray clothes, and a wig of many curls, accosted Johnson with familiar confidence, knowing who he was, while Johnson returned his salutation with a courteous formality, as to a stranger. But as soon as Edwards had brought to his recollection their having been at Pembroke College together nine-and-forty years ago, he seemed much pleased, asked where he lived, and said he should be glad to see him in Bolt-court. EDWARDS. "Ah, sir! we are old men now." JOHNSON (who never liked to think of being old). "Don't let us discourage one another." EDWARDS. "Why, doctor, you look stout and hearty. I am happy to see you so; for the newspapers told us you were very ill." JOHNSON. "Ay, sir, they are always telling lies of *us old fellows*."

Wishing to be present at more of so singular a conversation as that between two fellow-collegians, who had lived forty years in London without ever having chanced to meet, I whispered to Mr. Edwards that Dr. Johnson was going home, and that he had better accompany him now. So Edwards walked along with us, I eagerly assisting to keep up the conversation. Mr. Edwards informed Dr. Johnson

[1] [Oliver Edwards entered at Pembroke College only in June, 1729, so that he and Johnson could not have been long acquainted.—HALL.]

[2] [This deliberate assertion of Johnson, that he had not seen Edwards since 1729, is a confirmation of the opinion derived by Dr. Hall from the dates in the college books, that Johnson did not return to Pembroke College after Christmas, 1729—an important fact in his early history. See *ante*, vol. i. p. 47, *n.*—ED.]

that he had practised long as a solicitor in Chancery, but that he now lived in the country upon a little farm, about sixty acres, just by Stevenage, in Hertfordshire, and that he came to London (to Barnard's Inn, No. 6) generally twice a week. Johnson appearing to be in a reverie, Mr. Edwards addressed himself to me, and expatiated on the pleasure of living in the country. BOSWELL. "I have no notion of this, sir. What you have to entertain you is, I think, exhausted in half an hour." EDWARDS. "What! don't you love to have hope realised? I see my grass, and my corn, and my trees growing. Now, for instance, I am curious to see if this frost has not nipped my fruit trees." JOHNSON (who we did not imagine was attending). "You find, sir, you have fears as well as hopes." So well did he see the whole, when another saw but the half of a subject[1].

When we got to Dr. Johnson's house, and were seated in his library, the dialogue went on admirably. EDWARDS. "Sir, I remember you would not let us say *prodigious* at college. For even then, sir (turning to me), he was delicate in language, and we all feared him[2]." JOHNSON (to Edwards). "From your having practised the law long, sir, I presume you must be rich." EDWARDS. "No, sir; I got a good deal of money; but I had a number of poor relations to whom I gave a great part of it." JOHNSON. "Sir, you have been rich in the most valuable sense of the word." EDWARDS. "But I shall not die rich." JOHNSON. "Nay, sure, sir, it is better to *live* rich than to *die* rich." EDWARDS. "I wish I had continued at college." JOHNSON. "Why do

[1] [Nay, not so. The question raised was the want of *interest* in a country life; and the *fear* was, therefore, as good as the *hope*.—ED.]

[2] Johnson said to me afterwards, "Sir, they respected me for my literature; and yet it was not great but by comparison. Sir, it is amazing how little literature there is in the world."—BOSWELL.

you wish that, sir?" EDWARDS. "Because I think I should have had a much easier life than mine has been. I should have been a parson, and had a good living, like Bloxam[1] and several others, and lived comfortably." JOHNSON. "Sir, the life of a parson, of a conscientious clergyman, is not easy. I have always considered a clergyman as the father of a larger family than he is able to maintain. I would rather have Chancery suits upon my hands than the cure of souls. No, sir, I do not envy a clergyman's life as an easy life, nor do I envy the clergyman who makes it an easy life." Here taking himself up all of a sudden, he exclaimed, "O! Mr. Edwards, I'll convince you that I recollect you. Do you remember our drinking together at an alehouse near Pembroke-gate? At that time, you told me of the Eton boy, who, when verses on our Saviour's turning water into wine were prescribed as an exercise, brought up a single line, which was highly admired:

'Vidit et erubuit lympha pudica Deum[2];'

and I told you of another fine line in 'Camden's Remains;' an eulogy upon one of our kings, who was succeeded by his son, a prince of equal merit:

'Mira cano, Sol occubuit, nox nulla secuta est.'"

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[1] [Matthew Bloxam entered at Pembroke College, March 25, 1729; M. A., July, 1735.—HALL.]

[2] This line has frequently been attributed to Dryden, when a king's scholar at Westminster. But neither Eton nor Westminster have in truth any claim to it, the line being borrowed, with a slight change (as Mr. Bindley has observed to me), from an epigram by Richard Crashaw, which was published in his "Epigrammata Sacra," first printed at Cambridge, without the authour's name, in 1634, 8vo. The original is much more elegant than the copy, the water being personified, and the word on which the point of the epigram turns, being reserved to the close of the line:

"JOANN. 2.
Aquæ in vinum versæ.
Unde rubor vestris et non sua purpura lymphis?
Quæ rosa mirantes tam nova mutat aquas?
Numen, convivæ, præsens agnoscite numen,
Nympha pudica DEUM vidit, et *erubuit*."—MALONE.

EDWARDS. "You are a philosopher, Dr. Johnson. I have tried too in my time to be a philosopher; but, I don't know how, cheerfulness was always breaking in." Mr. Burke, Sir Joshua Reynolds, Mr. Courtenay, Mr. Malone, and, indeed, all the eminent men to whom I have mentioned this, have thought it an exquisite trait of character. The truth is, that philosophy, like religion, is too generally supposed to be hard and severe, at least so grave as to exclude all gaiety.

EDWARDS. "I have been twice married, doctor. You, I suppose, have never known what it was to have a wife." JOHNSON. "Sir, I have known what it was to have a wife, and (in a solemn, tender, faltering tone) I have known what it was to *lose a wife*. It had almost broke my heart."

EDWARDS. "How do you live, sir? For my part, I must have my regular meals, and a glass of good wine. I find I require it." JOHNSON. "I now drink no wine, sir. Early in life I drank wine; for many years I drank none. I then for some years drank a great deal." EDWARDS. "Some hogsheads, I warrant you." JOHNSON. "I then had a severe illness, and left it off, and I have never begun it again. I never felt any difference upon myself from eating one thing rather than another, nor from one kind of weather rather than another. There are people, I believe, who feel a difference; but I am not one of them. And as to regular meals, I have fasted from the Sunday's dinner to the Tuesday's dinner without any inconvenience. I believe it is best to eat just as one is hungry: but a man who is in business, or a man who has a family, must have stated meals. I am a straggler. I may leave this town and go to Grand Cairo, without being missed here, or observed

there." EDWARDS. "Don't you eat supper, sir?" JOHNSON. "No, sir." EDWARDS. "For my part, now, I consider supper as a turnpike through which one must pass in order to get to bed [1]."

JOHNSON. "You are a lawyer, Mr. Edwards. Lawyers know life practically. A bookish man should always have them to converse with. They have what he wants." EDWARDS. "I am grown old: I am sixty-five." JOHNSON. "I shall be sixty-eight next birth-day. Come, sir, drink water, and put in for a hundred."

Mr. Edwards mentioned a gentleman [2] who had left his whole fortune to Pembroke College. JOHNSON. "Whether to leave one's whole fortune to a college be right, must depend upon circumstances. I would leave the interest of the fortune I bequeathed to a college to my relations or my friends, for their lives. It is the same thing to a college, which is a permanent society, whether it gets the money now or twenty years hence; and I would wish to make my relations or friends feel the benefit of it."

This interview confirmed my opinion of Johnson's most humane and benevolent heart. His cordial and placid behaviour to an old fellow collegian, a man so different from himself; and his telling him that he would go down to his farm and visit him, showed a kindness of disposition very rare at an advanced age. He observed, "how wonderful it was that they had both been in London forty years, without having ever once met, and both walkers in the street too!" Mr. Edwards, when going away, again recurred to his

[1] I am not absolutely sure but this was my own suggestion, though it is truly in the character of Edwards.—BOSWELL.

[2] [This must have been the Rev. James Phipps, who had been a scholar of Pembroke, and who, in 1773, left his estates to the college to purchase livings for a particular foundation, and for other purposes.—HALL.]

consciousness of senility, and, looking full in Johnson's face, said to him, "You 'll find in Dr. Young,

'O my coevals! remnants of yourselves.'"

Johnson did not relish this at all; but shook his head with impatience. Edwards walked off seemingly highly pleased with the honour of having been thus noticed by Dr. Johnson. When he was gone, I said to Johnson, I thought him but a weak man. JOHNSON. "Why, yes, sir. Here is a man who has passed through life without experience: yet I would rather have him with me than a more sensible man who will not talk readily. This man is always willing to say what he has to say." Yet Dr. Johnson had himself by no means that willingness which he praised so much, and I think so justly: for who has not felt the painful effect of the dreary void, when there is a total silence in a company, for any length of time; or, which is as bad, or perhaps worse, when the conversation is with difficulty kept up by a perpetual effort?

Johnson once observed to me, "Tom Tyers described me the best: 'Sir,' said he, 'you are like a ghost: you never speak till you are spoken to[1].'"

Mr. Edwards had said to me aside, that Dr. Johnson should have been of a profession. I repeated the remark to Johnson, that I might have his own thoughts on the subject. JOHNSON. "Sir, it *would* have been better that I had been of a profession. I ought to have been a lawyer." BOSWELL. "I do not think, sir, it would have been better, for we should not have had the English Dictionary." JOHNSON. "But you would have had Reports." BOSWELL. "Ay; but there would not have been another who could have

[1] [Here followed the account of Mr. Tyers, now transferred to v. i. p. 303. —ED.]

written the Dictionary. There have been many very good judges. Suppose you had been lord chancellor; you would have delivered opinions with more extent of mind, and in a more ornamented manner, than perhaps any chancellor ever did, or ever will do. But, I believe, causes have been as judiciously decided as you could have done." JOHNSON. "Yes, sir. Property has been as well settled."

Johnson, however, had a noble ambition floating in his mind, and had, undoubtedly, often speculated on the possibility of his supereminent powers being rewarded in this great and liberal country by the highest honours of the state. Sir William Scott informs me, that upon the death of the late Lord Lichfield, who was chancellor of the University of Oxford, he said to Johnson, "What a pity it is, sir, that you did not follow the profession of the law! You might have been lord chancellor of Great Britain, and attained to the dignity of the peerage; and now that the title of Lichfield, your native city, is extinct, you might have had it." Johnson, upon this, seemed much agitated; and, in an angry tone, exclaimed, "Why will you vex me by suggesting this, when it is too late?"

But he did not repine at the prosperity of others. The late Dr. Thomas Leland told Mr. Courtenay that when Mr. Edmund Burke showed Johnson his fine house and lands near Beaconsfield, Johnson coolly said, "*Non equidem invideo; miror magis*[1]."

[1] I am not entirely without suspicion that Johnson may have felt a little momentary envy; for no man loved the good things of this life better than he did; and he could not but be conscious that he deserved a much larger share of them than he ever had. I attempted in a newspaper to comment on the above passage in the manner of Warburton, who must be allowed to have shown uncommon ingenuity, in giving to any authour's text whatever meaning he chose it should carry. As this imitation may amuse my readers, I shall here introduce it: "No saying of DR. JOHNSON's has been more misunderstood than his applying to MR. BURKE when he first saw him at his fine place at Beaconsfield, *Non equidem invideo; miror magis*. These two celebrated men had

Yet no man had a higher notion of the dignity of literature than Johnson, or was more determined in maintaining the respect which he justly considered as due to it. Of this, besides the general tenor of his conduct in society, some characteristical instances may be mentioned.

He told Sir Joshua Reynolds, that once when he dined in a numerous company of booksellers, where the room, being small, the head of the table, at which he sat, was almost close to the fire, he persevered in suffering a great deal of inconvenience from the heat, rather than quit his place, and let one of them sit above him.

Goldsmith, in his diverting simplicity, complained one day, in a mixed company, of Lord Camden. "I met him," said he, "at Lord Clare's[1] house in the country, and he took no more notice of me than if I had been an ordinary man." The company having laughed heartily, Johnson stood forth in defence of his friend. "Nay, gentlemen," said he, "Dr. Goldsmith is in the right. A nobleman ought to have made up to such a man as Goldsmith; and I think it is much against Lord Camden that he neglected him."

Nor could he patiently endure to hear, that such respect as he thought due only to higher intellectual qualities should be bestowed on men of slighter, though perhaps more amusing, talents. I told him,

been friends for many years before Mr. Burke entered on his parliamentary career. They were both writers, both members of THE LITERARY CLUB; when, therefore, Dr. Johnson saw Mr. Burke in a situation so much more splendid than that to which he himself had attained, he did not mean to express that he thought it a disproportionate prosperity; but while he, as a philosopher, asserted an exemption from envy, *non equidem invideo*, he went on in the words of the poet, *miror magis*; thereby signifying, either that he was occupied in admiring what he was glad to see, or, perhaps, that, considering the general lot of men of superiour abilities, he wondered that Fortune, who is represented as blind, should, in this instance, have been so just."—BOSWELL.

[1] [See *ante*, vol. ii. p. 123 *n.*—ED.]

that one morning, when I went to breakfast with Garrick, who was very vain of his intimacy with Lord Camden, he accosted me thus: "Pray now, did you—did you meet a little lawyer turning the corner, eh?" "No, sir," said I. "Pray what do you mean by the question?" "Why," replied Garrick, with an affected indifference, yet as if standing on tip-toe, "Lord Camden has this moment left me. We have had a long walk together." JOHNSON. "Well, sir, Garrick talked very properly. Lord Camden *was* a *little lawyer* to be associating so familiarly with a player."

Sir Joshua Reynolds observed, with great truth, that Johnson considered Garrick to be as it were his *property*. He would allow no man either to blame or to praise Garrick in his presence, without contradicting him[1].

Having fallen into a very serious frame of mind, in which mutual expressions of kindness passed between us, such as would be thought too vain in me to repeat, I talked with regret of the sad inevitable certainty that one of us must survive the other. JOHNSON. "Yes, sir, that is an affecting consideration. I remember Swift, in one of his letters to Pope, says, 'I intend to come over, that we may meet once more; and when we must part, it is what happens to all human beings.'" BOSWELL. "The hope that we shall see our departed friends again must support the mind." JOHNSON. "Why, yes, sir[2]."

[1] [Sir Joshua Reynolds wrote two Dialogues, in illustration of this position, in the first of which Johnson *attacks* Garrick in opposition to Sir Joshua, and in the other *defends* him against Gibbon. They were originally published in a periodical work, but are preserved in Miss Hawkins's *Memoirs*, v. ii. p. 110. Lord Farnborough has obligingly communicated to the Editor the evidence of the late Sir George Beaumont (who had received copies of them from Sir Joshua himself), both of their authenticity and of their correct imitation of Johnson's style of conversation, and the Editor has therefore given them a place in the Appendix.—ED.]

[2] See on the same subject, vol. ii. p. 155.—MALONE.

BOSWELL. "There is a strange unwillingness to part with life, independent of serious fears as to futurity. A reverend friend of ours[1] (naming him) tells me, that he feels an uneasiness at the thoughts of leaving his house, his study, his books." JOHNSON. "This is foolish in *****. A man need not be uneasy on these grounds: for, as he will retain his conciousness, he may say with the philosopher, *Omnia mea mecum porto.*" BOSWELL. "True, sir: we may carry our books in our heads; but still there is something painful in the thought of leaving for ever what has given us pleasure. I remember, many years ago, when my imagination was warm, and I happened to be in a melancholy mood, it distressed me to think of going into a state of being in which Shakspeare's poetry did not exist. A lady, whom I then much admired, a very amiable woman, humoured my fancy, and relieved me by saying, 'The first thing you will meet with in the other world will be an elegant copy of Shakspeare's works presented to you.'" Dr. Johnson smiled[2] benignantly at this, and did not appear to disapprove of the notion.

Piozzi, p. 144. [Knowing the state of Dr. Johnson's nerves, and how easily they were affected, Mrs. Piozzi forbore reading in a new magazine, one day, the death of a Samuel Johnson who expired that month; but he, snatching up the book, saw it himself, and, contrary to her expectation, only said, "Oh! I hope death will now be glutted with Sam Johnsons, and let me alone for some time to come: I read of another namesake's departure last week."]

We went to St. Clement's church again in the afternoon, and then returned and drank tea and coffee

[1] [Dr. Percy.—ED.]

[2] [Dr. Johnson might well smile at such a *distress* of mind, and at the argument by which it was *relieved*.—ED.]

in Mrs. Williams's room; Mrs. Desmoulins doing the honours of the tea-table. I observed that he would not even look at a proof-sheet of his "Life of Waller" on Good-Friday.

Mr. Allen, the printer, brought a book on agriculture, which was printed, and was soon to be published[1]. It was a very strange performance, the authour having mixed in it his own thoughts upon various topicks, along with his remarks on ploughing, sowing, and other farming operations. He seemed to be an absurd profane fellow, and had introduced in his books many sneers at religion, with equal ignorance and conceit. Dr. Johnson permitted me to read some passages aloud. One was that he resolved to work on Sunday, and did work, but he owned he felt *some* weak compunction; and he had this very curious reflection: "I was born in the wilds of Christianity, and the briars and thorns still hang about me." Dr. Johnson could not help laughing at this ridiculous image, yet was very angry at the fellow's impiety. "However," said he, "the reviewers will make him hang himself." He, however, observed, "that formerly there might have been a dispensation obtained for working on Sunday in the time of harvest." Indeed in ritual observances, were all the ministers of religion what they should be, and what many of them are, such a power might be wisely and safely lodged with the church.

On Saturday, 18th April, I drank tea with him. He praised the late Mr. Duncombe[2], of Canterbury, as a pleasing man. "He used to come to me; I did not seek much after *him*. Indeed I never sought much after any body." BOSWELL. "Lord Orrery, I suppose." JOHNSON. "No, sir; I never went

[1] [Marshall's "Minutes of Agriculture."—ED.]

[2] William Duncombe, Esq. He married the sister of John Hughes, the poet; was the authour of two tragedies, and other ingenious productions; and died 26th Feb. 1769, aged 79.—MALONE.

to him but when he sent for me." BOSWELL. "Richardson?" JOHNSON. "Yes, sir: but I sought after George Psalmanazar the most. I used to go and sit with him at an alehouse in the city."

Piozzi, p. 134, 135. [When Mrs. Piozzi asked Dr. Johnson who was the *best* man he had ever known? "Psalmanazar" was the unexpected reply. He said, likewise, "that though a native of France, as his friend imagined, he possessed more of the English language than any other foreigner who had fallen in his way." Though there was much esteem, however, there was I believe but little confidence between them; they conversed merely about general topics, religion and learning, of which both were undoubtedly stupendous examples; and, with regard to true Christian perfection, I have heard Johnson say, "That George Psalmanazar's piety, penitence, and virtue, exceeded almost what we read as wonderful even in the lives of saints."

This extraordinary person lived and died at a house in Old-street, where Dr. Johnson was witness to his talents and virtues, and to his final preference of the church of England, after having studied, disgraced, and adorned so many modes of worship. The name he went by was not supposed by his friend to be that of his family; but all inquiries were vain; his reasons for concealing his original were penitentiary; he deserved no other name than that of the Impostor, he said. That portion of the Universal History which was written by him does not seem to me to be composed with peculiar spirit; but all traces of the wit and the wanderer were probably worn out before he undertook the work. His pious and patient endurance of a tedious illness, ending in an exemplary death, confirmed the strong impression his merit had made upon the mind of Dr. Johnson.]

[He had never, he said, seen the close of the life of any one that he wished so much his own to resemble, as that of Psalmanazar, for its purity and devotion. He told many anecdotes of him; and said, he was supposed, by his accent, to have been a Gascon; but that he spoke English with the city accent, and coarse enough. He for some years spent his evenings at a publick-house near Old-street, where many persons went to talk with him. When Dr. Johnson was asked whether he ever contradicted Psalmanazar; "I should as soon," said he, "have thought of contradicting a bishop:" so high did he hold his character in the latter part of his life. When he was asked whether he ever mentioned Formosa before him, he said, "he was afraid to mention even China."] Hawk. Apoph. p. 206.

I am happy to mention another instance which I discovered of his *seeking after* a man of merit. Soon after the Honourable Daines Barrington had published his excellent "Observations on the Statutes [1]," Johnson waited on that worthy and learned gentleman; and, having told him his name, courteously said, "I have read your book, sir, with great pleasure, and wish to be better known to you." Thus began an acquaintance, which was continued with mutual regard as long as Johnson lived.

Talking of a recent seditious delinquent [2], he said, "They should set him in the pillory, that he may be punished in a way that would disgrace him." I observed, that the pillory does not always disgrace.

[1] 4to. 1766. The worthy authour died many years after Johnson, March 13, 1800, aged about 74.—MALONE.

[2] [Mr. Horne Tooke, who had been in the preceding July convicted of a seditious libel. The sentence—pronounced in November, 1777—was a year's imprisonment, and 200*l.* fine; but it seems strange that Johnson should, in April, 1778, have spoken *conjecturally* of a sentence passed six months before. Perhaps the conversation occurred at Auburn in the preceding autumn, when the sentence was a subject of much conjecture and curiosity, and that, by some mistake in arranging his notes, Mr. Boswell has misplaced it here.—ED.]

And I mentioned an instance of a gentleman [1], who I thought was not dishonoured by it. JOHNSON. "Ay, but he was, sir. He could not mouth and strut as he used to do, after having been there. People are not willing to ask a man to their tables who has stood in the pillory."

The gentleman who had dined with us at Dr. Percy's [2] came in. Johnson attacked the Americans with intemperate vehemence of abuse. I said something in their favour; and added, that I was always sorry when he talked on that subject. This, it seems, exasperated him; though he said nothing at the time. The cloud was charged with sulphureous vapour, which was afterwards to burst in thunder. We talked of a gentleman [3] who was running out his fortune in London; and I said, "We must get him out of it. All his friends must quarrel with him, and that will soon drive him away." JOHNSON. "Nay, sir, we'll send *you* to him. If your company does not drive a man out of his house, nothing will." This was a horrible shock, for which there was no visible cause. I afterwards asked him why he had said so harsh a thing. JOHNSON. "Because, sir, you made me angry about the Americans." BOSWELL. "But why did you not take your revenge directly?" JOHNSON (smiling). "Because, sir, I had nothing ready. A man cannot strike till he has his weapons." This was a candid and pleasant confession.

[1] [Probably Dr. Shebbeare. It was Shebbeare's exposure which suggested the witty allusion of the *Heroick Epistle*,

"Does envy doubt? Witness, ye chosen train,
Who breathe the sweets of his Saturnian reign;
Witness, ye Hills, ye Johnsons, Scots, Shebbeares,
Hark to my call, *for some of you have ears!*"

But his ears were not endangered; indeed he was so favourably treated, being allowed to stand *on*, and not *in*, the pillory, and to have certain other indulgences, that the sheriff was afterwards prosecuted for partiality towards him.—ED.]

[2] See p. 131, of this volume.—BOSWELL.

[Mr. Langton.—ED.]

He showed me to-night his drawing-room, very genteelly fitted up, and said, Mrs. Thrale sneered when I talked of my having asked you and your lady to live at my house. I was obliged to tell her that you would be in as respectable a situation in my house as in hers. "Sir, the insolence of wealth will creep out." BOSWELL. "She has a little both of the insolence of wealth and the conceit of parts." JOHNSON. "The insolence of wealth is a wretched thing; but the conceit of parts has some foundation. To be sure, it should not be. But who is without it?" BOSWELL. "Yourself, sir." JOHNSON. "Why, I play no tricks: I lay no traps." BOSWELL. "No, sir. You are six feet high, and you only do not stoop."

We talked of the numbers of people that sometimes have composed the household of great families. I mentioned that there were a hundred in the family of the present Earl of Eglintoune's father. Dr. Johnson seeming to doubt it, I began to enumerate; "Let us see, my lord and my lady, two." JOHNSON. "Nay, sir, if you are to count by twos, you may be long enough." BOSWELL. "Well, but now I add two sons and seven daughters, and a servant for each, that will make twenty; so we have the fifth part already." JOHNSON. "Very true. You get at twenty pretty readily; but you will not so easily get further on. We grow to five feet pretty readily; but it is not so easy to grow to seven."

[Yesterday (18th) I rose late, having not slept ill. Having promised a dedication, I thought it necessary [1] to write; but for some time neither wrote nor read. Langton came in and talked. After dinner I wrote. At tea Boswell came in. He staid till near twelve.] Prayers & Med. p. 163.

[1] [He means that if it had not been in performance of a *promise*, he would not have done any worldly business on Easter eve. What the dedication was does not appear.—ED.]

On Sunday, 19th April, being Easter-day, after the solemnities of the festival in St. Paul's church, I visited him, but could not stay to dinner. I expressed a wish to have the arguments for Christianity always in readiness, that my religious faith might be as firm and clear as any proposition whatever; so that I need not be under the least uneasiness when it should be attacked. JOHNSON. "Sir, you cannot answer all objections. You have demonstration for a first cause: you see he must be good as well as powerful, because there is nothing to make him otherwise, and goodness of itself is preferable. Yet you have against this, what is very certain, the unhappiness of human life. This, however, gives us reason to hope for a future state of compensation, that there may be a perfect system. But of that we were not sure till we had a positive revelation." I told him that his "Rasselas" had often made me unhappy; for it represented the misery of human life so well, and so convincingly to a thinking mind, that if at any time the impression wore off, and I felt myself easy, I began to suspect some delusion.

Prayers & Med. p. 167, 168.

[In reviewing my time from Easter, 1777, I found a very melancholy and shameful blank. So little has been done, that days and months are without any trace. My health has, indeed, been very much interrupted. My nights have been commonly, not only restless, but painful and fatiguing. My respiration was once so difficult, that an asthma was suspected. I could not walk, but with great difficulty, from Stowhill to Greenhill. Some relaxation of my breast has been procured, I think, by opium, which, though it never gives me sleep, frees my breast from spasms.

I have written a little of the Lives of the Poets. I think with all my usual vigour. I have made sermons, perhaps as readily as formerly. My memory is less faithful in retaining names, and, I am afraid, in retaining occurrences. Of this vacillation and vagrancy of mind, I impute a great part to a fortuitous and unsettled life, and therefore purpose to spend my time with more method.]

On Monday, 20th April, I found him at home in the morning. We talked of a gentleman who we apprehended was gradually involving his circumstances by bad management[1]. JOHNSON. "Wasting a fortune is evaporation by a thousand imperceptible means. If it were a stream, they'd stop it. You must speak to him. It is really miserable. Were he a gamester, it could be said he had hopes of winning. Were he a bankrupt in trade, he might have grown rich; but he has neither spirit to spend, nor resolution to spare. He does not spend fast enough to have pleasure from it. He has the crime of prodigality, and the wretchedness of parsimony. If a man is killed in a duel, he is killed as many a one has been killed; but it is a sad thing for a man to lie down and die; to bleed to death, because he has not fortitude enough to sear the wound, or even to stitch it up." I cannot but pause a moment to admire the fecundity of fancy, and choice of language, which in this instance, and, indeed, on almost all occasions, he displayed. It was well observed by Dr. Percy, (afterwards Bishop of Dromore), "The conversation of Johnson is strong and clear, and may be compared to an antique statue, where every vein and muscle is distinct and bold. Ordinary conversation resembles an inferiour cast."

On Saturday, 25th April, I dined with him at Sir Joshua Reynolds's, with the learned Dr. Musgrave[2], Counsellor Leland of Ireland, son to the historian, Mrs. Cholmondeley, and some more ladies. "The Project," a new poem, was read to the company by

[1] [Mr. Langton.—ED.]

[2] Samuel Musgrave, M. D. editor of the Euripides, and authour of "Dissertations on the Grecian Mythology," &c. published in 1782, after his death, by the learned Mr. Tyrwhitt.—MALONE. [I suppose this is the same who was made Radcliffe's travelling fellow in 1760. He was of C. C. C. M. A. 1756. B. and D. M. 1775.—HALL.]

Dr. Musgrave. JOHNSON. "Sir, it has no power. Were it not for the well-known names with which it is filled, it would be nothing: the names carry the poet, not the poet the names." MUSGRAVE. "A temporary poem always entertains us." JOHNSON. "So does an account of the criminals hanged yesterday entertain us."

He proceeded;—"Demosthenes Taylor, as he was called (that is, the editor of Demosthenes), was the most silent man, the merest statue of a man, that I have ever seen. I once dined in company with him, and all he said during the whole time was no more than *Richard.* How a man should say only *Richard,* it is not easy to imagine. But it was thus: Dr. Douglas was talking of Dr. Zachary Grey, and ascribing to him something that was written by Dr. Richard Grey. So, to correct him, Taylor said, '*Richard.*'"

Mrs. Cholmondeley, in a high flow of spirits, exhibited some lively sallies of hyperbolical compliment to Johnson, with whom she had been long acquainted, and was very easy. He was quick in catching the *manner* of the moment, and answered her somewhat in the style of the hero of a romance, "Madam, you crown me with unfading laurels."

Murph. Essay, p. 137. [Sitting at table one day with Mrs. Cholmondeley, he took hold of her hand in the middle of dinner, and held it close to his eye, wondering at the delicacy and whiteness, till, with a smile, she asked, "Will he give it to me again when he has done with it?"]

I happened, I know not how, to say that a pamphlet meant a prose piece. JOHNSON. "No, sir. A few sheets of poetry unbound are a pamphlet[1], as

[1] Dr. Johnson is here perfectly correct, and is supported by the usage of pre-

much as a few sheets of prose." MUSGRAVE. "A pamphlet may be understood to mean a poetical piece in Westminster-hall, that is, in formal language; but in common language it is understood to mean prose." JOHNSON. (And here was one of the many instances of his knowing clearly and telling exactly how a thing is), "A pamphlet is understood in common language to mean prose, only from this, that there is so much more prose written than poetry; as when we say a *book*, prose is understood for the same reason, though a book may as well be in poetry as in prose. We understand what is most general, and we name what is less frequent."

We talked of a lady's verses on Ireland. MISS REYNOLDS. "Have you seen them, sir?" JOHNSON. "No, madam; I have seen a translation from Horace, by one of her daughters. She showed it me." MISS REYNOLDS. "And how was it, sir?" JOHNSON. "Why, very well, for a young miss's verses; that is to say, compared with excellence, nothing; but very well, for the person who wrote them. I am vexed at being shown verses in that manner." MISS REYNOLDS. "But if they should be good, why not give them hearty praise?" JOHNSON. "Why, madam, because I have not then got the better of my bad humour from having been shown them. You must consider, madam, beforehand they may be bad as well as good. Nobody has a right to put another under such a difficulty, that he must either hurt the person by telling the truth, or hurt himself by telling what is not true." BOSWELL. "A man often shows his writings to people of eminence, to obtain from them, either from their good-

ceding writers. So in Musarum Deliciæ, a collection of poems, 8vo. 1656, (the writer is speaking of Suckling's play entitled Aglaura, printed in folio):

"This great voluminous *pamphlet* may be said,
To be like one, that hath more hair than head."—MALONE.

nature, or from their not being able to tell the truth firmly, a commendation, of which he may afterwards avail himself." JOHNSON. "Very true, sir. Therefore, the man who is asked by an authour, what he thinks of his work, is put to *the torture*, and is not obliged to speak the truth; so that what he says is not considered as his opinion; yet he has said it, and cannot retract it; and this authour, when mankind are hunting him with a canister at his tail, can say, 'I would not have published, had not Johnson, or Reynolds, or Musgrave, or some other good judge commended the work.' Yet I consider it as a very difficult question in conscience, whether one should advise a man not to publish a work, if profit be his object; for the man may say, 'Had it not been for you, I should have had the money.' Now you cannot be sure; for you have only your own opinion, and the publick may think very differently." SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS. "You must upon such an occasion have two judgments; one as to the real value of the work, the other as to what may please the general taste at the time." JOHNSON. "But you can be *sure* of neither; and therefore I should scruple much to give a suppressive vote. Both Goldsmith's comedies were once refused; his first by Garrick, his second by Colman, who was prevailed on at last by much solicitation, nay, a kind of force, to bring it on. His 'Vicar of Wakefield' I myself did not think would have had much success. It was written and sold to a bookseller before his 'Traveller,' but published after; so little expectation had the bookseller from it. Had it been sold after 'The Traveller,' he might have had twice as much money for it, though sixty guineas was no mean price. The bookseller had the advantage of Goldsmith's reputation from 'The Traveller' in the sale, though Gold-

smith had it not in selling the copy." SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS. "The Beggar's Opera affords a proof how strangely people will differ in opinion about a literary performance. Burke thinks it has no merit." JOHNSON. "It was refused by one of the houses; but I should have thought it would succeed, not from any great excellence in the writing, but from the novelty, and the general spirit and gaiety of the piece, which keeps the audience always attentive, and dismisses them in good humour."

We went to the drawing-room, where was a considerable increase of company. Several of us got round Dr. Johnson, and complained that he would not give us an exact catalogue of his works, that there might be a complete edition. He smiled, and evaded our entreaties. That he intended to do it, I have no doubt, because I have heard him say so; and I have in my possession an imperfect list, fairly written out, which he entitles *Historia Studiorum.* I once got from one of his friends a list, which there was pretty good reason to suppose was accurate, for it was written down in his presence by this friend, who enumerated each article aloud, and had some of them mentioned to him by Mr. Levett, in concert with whom it was made out; and Johnson, who heard all this, did not contradict it. But when I showed a copy of this list to him, and mentioned the evidence for its exactness, he laughed, and said, "I was willing to let them go on as they pleased, and never interfered." Upon which I read it to him, article by article, and got him positively to own or refuse; and then, having obtained certainty so far, I got some other articles confirmed by him directly, and, afterwards, from time to time, made additions under his sanction.

His friend, Edward Cave, having been mentioned,

he told us, "Cave used to sell ten thousand of 'The Gentleman's Magazine;' yet such was then his minute attention and anxiety that the sale should not suffer the smallest decrease, that he would name a particular person who he heard had talked of leaving off the Magazine, and would say, 'Let us have something good next month.'"

It was observed, that avarice was inherent in some dispositions. JOHNSON. "No man was born a miser, because no man was born to possession. Every man is born *cupidus*—desirous of getting; but not *avarus* —desirous of keeping." BOSWELL. "I have heard old Mr. Sheridan maintain, with much ingenuity, that a complete miser is a happy man: a miser who gives himself wholly to the one passion of saving." JOHNSON. "That is flying in the face of all the world, who have called an avaricious man a *miser*, because he is miserable. No, sir; a man who both spends and saves money is the happiest man, because he has both enjoyments."

The conversation having turned on *bon-mots*, he quoted, from one of the *Ana*, an exquisite instance of flattery in a maid of honour in France, who being asked by the queen what o'clock it was, answered, "What your majesty pleases[1]." He admitted that Mr. Burke's classical pun[2] upon Mr. Wilkes's being carried on the shoulders of the mob,

Hor. 4. Od. 2. 25.

"———————— numerisque fertur
Lege solutis,"

was admirable; and though he was strangely unwill-

[1] [The anecdote is told in "*Menagiana*," vol. iii. p. 104, but not of a "*maid of honour*," nor as an instance of "*exquisite flattery*." "M. de Uzès était chevalier d'honneur de la reine. Cette princesse lui demanda un jour quelle heure il était; il répondit, 'Madame, l'heure qu'il plaira à votre majesté.'" Menage tells it as *a pleasantry* of M. de Uzès; but M. de la Monnoye says, that this duke was remarkable for *naïvetés* and blunders, and was a kind of *butt*, to whom the wits of the court used to attribute all manner of absurdities.—ED.]

[2] [See *ante*, vol. ii. p. 269.—ED.]

ing to allow to that extraordinary man the talent of wit[1], he also laughed with approbation at another of his playful conceits; which was, that "Horace has in one line given a description of a good desirable manour:

'Est *modus* in rebus, sunt certi denique *fines*[2];' 1 Sat. 1. 106.

that is to say, a *modus* as to the tithes and certain *fines*."

He observed, "A man cannot with propriety speak of himself, except he relates simple facts; as, 'I was at Richmond:' or what depends on mensuration; as, 'I am six feet high.' He is sure he has been at Richmond; he is sure he is six feet high; but he cannot be sure he is wise, or that he has any other excellence. Then, all censure of a man's self is oblique praise. It is in order to show how much he can spare. It has all the invidiousness of self-praise and all the reproach of falsehood." BOSWELL. "Sometimes it may proceed from a man's strong consciousness of his faults being observed. He knows that others would throw him down, and therefore he had better lie down softly of his own accord."

On Tuesday, April 28, he was engaged to dine at General Paoli's, where, as I have already observed, I was still entertained in elegant hospitality, and with all the ease and comfort of a home. I called on him, and accompanied him in a hackney-coach. We

[1] See this question fully investigated in the notes upon the "Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides," *ante*, v. ii. p. 269, *et seq.* And here, as a lawyer mindful of the maxim *Suum cuique tribuito*, I cannot forbear to mention, that the additional note, beginning with "I find since the former edition," is not mine, but was obligingly furnished by Mr. Malone, who was so kind as to superintend the press while I was in Scotland, and the first part of the second edition was printing. He would not allow me to ascribe it to its proper authour; but, as it is exquisitely acute and elegant, I take this opportunity, without his knowledge, to do him justice.—BOSWELL.

[2] This, as both Mr. Bindley and Dr. Kearney have observed to me, is the motto to "An Inquiry into Customary Estates and Tenant's Rights, &c.; with some Considerations for restraining excessive *Fines*," by Everard Fleetwood, esq. 8vo. 1731. But it is, probably, a mere coincidence. Mr. Burke, perhaps, never saw that pamphlet.—MALONE.

stopped first at the bottom of Hedge-lane, into which he went to leave a letter, "with good news for a poor man in distress," as he told me. I did not question him particularly as to this. He himself often resembled Lady Bolingbroke's lively description of Pope: that "he was *un politique aux choux et aux raves.*" He would say, "I dine to-day in Grosvenor-square;" this might be with a duke; or, perhaps, "I dine to-day at the other end of the town;" or, "A gentleman of great eminence called on me yesterday." He loved thus to keep things floating in conjecture: *Omne ignotum pro magnifico est.* I believe I ventured to dissipate the cloud, to unveil the mystery, more freely and frequently than any of his friends. We stopped again at Wirgman's, the well-known *toy-shop* in St. James's-street, at the corner of St. James's-place, to which he had been directed, but not clearly, for he searched about some time, and could not find it at first; and said, "To direct one only to a corner shop is *toying* with one." I supposed he meant this as a play upon the word *toy;* it was the first time that I knew him stoop to such sport. After he had been some time in the shop, he sent for me to come out of the coach, and help him to choose a pair of silver buckles, as those he had were too small. Probably this alteration in dress had been suggested by Mrs. Thrale, by associating with whom, his external appearance was much improved. He got better clothes; and the dark colour, from which he never deviated, was enlivened by metal buttons. His wigs, too, were much better; and, during their travels in France, he was furnished with a Paris-made wig, of handsome construction. [In general his wigs were very shabby, and their fore parts were burned away by the near approach of the candle, which his short-sightedness

rendered necessary in reading. At Streatham, Mr. Thrale's butler had always a better wig ready, and as Johnson passed from the drawing-room, when dinner was announced, the servant would remove the ordinary wig, and replace it with the newer one, and this ludicrous ceremony was performed every day.] This choosing of silver buckles was a negotiation: "Sir," said he, "I will not have the ridiculous large ones now in fashion; and I will give no more than a guinea for a pair." Such were the *principles* of the business; and, after some examination, he was fitted. As we drove along, I found him in a talking humour, of which I availed myself. BOSWELL. "I was this morning in Ridley's shop, sir; and was told, that the collection called '*Johnsoniana*[1]' had sold very much." JOHNSON. "Yet the 'Journey to the Hebrides' has not had a great sale[2]." BOSWELL. "That is strange." JOHNSON. "Yes, sir; for in that book I have told the world a great deal that they did not know before." ED.

BOSWELL. "I drank chocolate, sir, this morning with Mr. Eld; and, to my no small surprise, found him to be a *Staffordshire whig*, a being which I did not believe had existed." JOHNSON. "Sir, there are rascals in all countries." BOSWELL. "Eld said, a *tory* was a creature generated between a non-juring parson and one's grandmother." JOHNSON. "And I have always said, the first whig was the devil." BOSWELL. "He certainly was, sir. The devil was

[1] [See *ante*, v. iii. p. 318.—ED.]

[2] Here he either was mistaken, or had a different notion of an extensive sale from what is generally entertained: for the fact is, that four thousand copies of that excellent work were sold very quickly. A new edition has been printed since his death, besides that in the collection of his works.—BOSWELL. Another edition has been printed since Mr. Boswell wrote the above, besides repeated editions in the general collection of his works during the last twenty years.—MALONE.

impatient of subordination; he was the first who resisted power:

"'Better to reign in hell, than serve in heaven.'"

At General Paoli's were Sir Joshua Reynolds, Mr. Langton, Marchese Gherardi of Lombardy, and Mr. John Spottiswoode the younger, of Spottiswoode [1], the solicitor. At this time fears of an invasion were circulated; to obviate which Mr. Spottiswoode observed, that Mr. Fraser, the engineer, who had lately come from Dunkirk, said, that the French had the same fears of us. JOHNSON. "It is thus that mutual cowardice keeps us in peace. Were one half of mankind brave, and one half cowards, the brave would be always beating the cowards. Were all brave, they would lead a very uneasy life; all would be continually fighting: but being all cowards, we go on very well." [One afternoon, while all the talk was of this apprehended invasion, he said most pathetically, "Alas! alas! how this unmeaning stuff spoils all my comfort in my friends' conversation! Will the people never have done with it; and shall I never hear a sentence again without the French in it? Here is no invasion coming, and you know there is none. Let such vexatious and frivolous talk alone, or suffer it at least to teach you *one* truth; and learn by this perpetual echo of even unapprehended distress, how historians magnify events expected, or calamities endured; when you know they are at this very moment collecting all the big words they can find, in which to describe a consternation never felt, for a misfor-

Piozzi, p. 63, 4.

[1] In the phraseology of Scotland, I should have said, "Mr. John Spottiswoode the younger, *of that ilk*." Johnson knew that sense of the word very well, and has thus explained it in his "Dictionary"—*voce*, *Ilk*. "It also signifies 'the same;' as, *Mackintosh of that ilk*, denotes a gentleman whose surname and the title of his estate are the same."—BOSWELL.

tune which never happened. Among all your lamentations, who eats the less? Who sleeps the worse, for one general's ill success, or another's capitulation? Oh, pray let us hear no more of it!"] Piozzi, p. 64.

We talked of drinking wine. JOHNSON. "I require wine, only when I am alone. I have then often wished for it, and often taken it." SPOTTISWOODE. "What, by way of a companion, sir?" JOHNSON. "To get rid of myself, to send myself away. Wine gives great pleasure; and every pleasure is of itself a good. It is a good, unless counterbalanced by evil. A man may have a strong reason not to drink wine; and that may be greater than the pleasure. Wine makes a man better pleased with himself. I do not say that it makes him more pleasing to others. Sometimes it does. But the danger is, that while a man grows better pleased with himself, he may be growing less pleasing to others[1]. Wine gives a man nothing. It neither gives him knowledge nor wit; it only animates a man, and enables him to bring out what a dread of the company has repressed. It only puts in motion what has been locked up in frost. But this may be good, or it may be bad." SPOTTISWOODE. "So, sir, wine is a key which opens a box; but this box may be either full or empty?" JOHNSON. "Nay, sir, conversation is the key: wine is a pick-lock, which forces open the box, and injures it. A man should cultivate his mind so as to have that confidence and readiness without wine, which wine gives." BOSWELL. "The great difficulty of resisting wine is from benevolence. For instance, a good worthy man asks you to taste his wine, which he has had twenty

[1] It is observed in "Waller's Life," in the "Biographia Britannica," that he drank only water; and that while he sat in a company who were drinking wine, "he had the dexterity to accommodate his discourse to the pitch of theirs as it *sunk*." If excess in drinking be meant, the remark is acutely just. But surely, a moderate use of wine gives a gaiety of spirits which water-drinkers know not.—BOSWELL.

years in his cellar." JOHNSON. "Sir, all this notion about benevolence arises from a man's imagining himself to be of more importance to others than he really is. They don't care a farthing whether he drinks wine or not." SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS. "Yes, they do for the time." JOHNSON. "For the time! If they care this minute, they forget it the next. And as for the good worthy man, how do you know he is good and worthy? No good and worthy man will insist upon another man's drinking wine. As to the wine twenty years in the cellar,—of ten men, three say this, merely because they must say something; three are telling a lie, when they say they have had the wine twenty years;—three would rather save the wine; one, perhaps, cares. I allow it is something to please one's company; and people are always pleased with those who partake pleasure with them. But after a man has brought himself to relinquish the great personal pleasure which arises from drinking wine[1], any other consideration is a trifle. To please others by drinking wine, is something only, if there be nothing against it. I should, however, be sorry to offend worthy men:

> 'Curst be the verse, how well so e'er it flow,
> That tends to make one worthy man my foe.'"

BOSWELL. "Curst be the *spring*, the *water*." JOHNSON. "But let us consider what a sad thing it would be, if we were obliged to drink or do any thing else that may happen to be agreeable to the company where we are." LANGTON. "By the same rule, you must join with a gang of cut-purses." JOHNSON. "Yes, sir; but yet we must do justice to wine; we must allow it the power it possesses. To make a man

[1] [See *ante*, vol. i. p. 74, and vol. iii. p. 407.—ED.]

pleased with himself, let me tell you, is doing a very great thing;

'Si patriæ volumus, si *nobis* vivere cari.'"

I was at this time myself a water-drinker, upon trial, by Johnson's recommendation. JOHNSON. "Boswell is a bolder combatant than Sir Joshua; he argues for wine without the help of wine; but Sir Joshua with it." SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS. "But to please one's company is a strong motive." JOHNSON (who, from drinking only water, supposed every body who drank wine to be elevated). "I won't argue any more with you, sir. You are too far gone." SIR JOSHUA. "I should have thought so indeed, sir, had I made such a speech as you have now done." JOHNSON (drawing himself in, and, I really thought, blushing). "Nay, don't be angry. I did not mean to offend you." SIR JOSHUA. "At first the taste of wine was disagreeable to me; but I brought myself to drink it, that I might be like other people. The pleasure of drinking wine is so connected with pleasing your company, that altogether there is something of social goodness in it." JOHNSON. "Sir, this is only saying the same thing over again." SIR JOSHUA. "No, this is new." JOHNSON. "You put it in new words, but it is an old thought. This is one of the disadvantages of wine, it makes a man mistake words for thoughts." BOSWELL. "I think it is a new thought; at least it is in a new *attitude*." JOHNSON. "Nay, sir, it is only in a new coat; or an old coat with a new facing." Then laughing heartily: "It is the old dog in the new doublet. An extraordinary instance, however, may occur where a man's patron will do nothing for him, unless he will drink: *there* may be a good reason for drinking."

I mentioned a nobleman[1], who I believed was really uneasy, if his company would not drink hard. JOHNSON. "That is from having had people about him whom he has been accustomed to command." BOSWELL. "Supposing I should be *tête-à-tête* with him at table?" JOHNSON. "Sir, there is no more reason for your drinking with *him*, than his being sober with *you*." BOSWELL. "Why, that is true; for it would do him less hurt to be sober, than it would do me to get drunk." JOHNSON. "Yes, sir; and from what I have heard of him, one would not wish to sacrifice himself to such a man. If he must always have somebody to drink with him, he should buy a slave, and then he would be sure to have it. They who submit to drink as another pleases, make themselves his slaves." BOSWELL. "But, sir, you will surely make allowance for the duty of hospitality. A gentleman who loves drinking, comes to visit me." JOHNSON. "Sir, a man knows whom he visits; he comes to the table of a sober man." BOSWELL. "But, sir, you and I should not have been so well received in the Highlands and Hebrides, if I had not drunk with our worthy friends. Had I drunk water only as you did, they would not have been so cordial." JOHNSON. "Sir William Temple mentions, that in his travels through the Netherlands he had two or three gentlemen with him; and when a bumper was necessary, he put it on *them*. Were I to travel again through the islands, I would have Sir Joshua with me to take the bumpers." BOSWELL. "But, sir, let me put a case. Suppose Sir Joshua should take a jaunt into Scotland; he does me the honour to pay me a visit at my house in the country; I am overjoyed at seeing him; we are quite by ourselves; shall

[1] [Perhaps Lord Kellie. See *ante*, p. 20.—ED.]

I unsociably and churlishly let him sit drinking by himself? No, no, my dear Sir Joshua, you shall not be treated so; I *will* take a bottle with you."

The celebrated Mrs. Rudd[1] being mentioned: JOHNSON. "Fifteen years ago I should have gone to see her." SPOTTISWOODE. "Because she was fifteen years younger?" JOHNSON. "No, sir; but now they have a trick of putting every thing into the newspapers."

He begged of General Paoli to repeat one of the introductory stanzas of the first book of Tasso's "Jerusalem," which he did, and then Johnson found fault with the simile of sweetening the edges of a cup for a child, being transferred from Lucretius into an epick poem. The general said he did not imagine Homer's poetry was so ancient as is supposed, because he ascribes to a Greek colony circumstances of refinement not found in Greece itself at a later period, when Thucydides wrote. JOHNSON. "I recollect but one passage quoted by Thucydides from Homer, which is not to be found in our copies of Homer's works; I am for the antiquity of Homer, and think that a Grecian colony by being nearer Persia might be more refined than the mother country."

On Wednesday, 29th April, I dined with him at Mr. Allan Ramsay's, where were Lord Binning, Dr. Robertson, the historian, Sir Joshua Reynolds, and the Honourable Mrs. Boscawen[2], widow of the admiral, and mother of the present Viscount Falmouth; of whom, if it be not presumptuous in me to praise her, I would say, that her manners are the most agreeable, and her conversation the best, of any lady with whom I ever had the happiness to be acquainted.

[1] [See *ante*, vol. iii. p. 337, *n.*—ED.]

[2] [Frances, daughter of William Evelyn Glanville, Esq., married in 1742 to Admiral Boscawen. They were the parents of George Evelyn, third Viscount Falmouth, of Frances, married to the Hon. John Leveson Gower, and of Elizabeth, the wife of the fifth Duke of Beaufort. Mrs. Boscawen died in 1805.—ED.]

Before Johnson came we talked a good deal of him. Ramsay said, he had always found him a very polite man, and that he treated him with great respect, which he did very sincerely. I said, I worshipped him. ROBERTSON. "But some of you spoil him: you should not worship him; you should worship no man." BOSWELL. "I cannot help worshipping him, he is so much superiour to other men." ROBERTSON. "In criticism, and in wit and conversation, he is no doubt very excellent; but in other respects he is not above other men: he will believe any thing, and will strenuously defend the most minute circumstance connected with the church of England." BOSWELL. "Believe me, Doctor, you are much mistaken as to this; for when you talk with him calmly in private, he is very liberal in his way of thinking." ROBERTSON. "He and I have been always very gracious; the first time I met him was one evening at Strahan's, when he had just had an unlucky altercation with Adam Smith[1], to whom he had been so rough, that Strahan, after Smith was gone, had remonstrated with him, and told him that I was coming soon, and that he was uneasy to think that he might behave in the same manner to me. 'No, no, sir, (said Johnson), I warrant you Robertson and I shall do very well.' Accordingly he was gentle and good humoured and courteous with me, the whole evening; and he has been so upon every occasion that we have met since. I have often said, (laughing) that I have been in a great measure indebted to Smith for my good reception." BOSWELL. "His power of reason-

[1] [The Editor, thinking it hardly possible that Boswell should have omitted all mention of Adam Smith *if* Johnson had met him at Glasgow, almost doubts whether the violent scene reported to have taken place *there* (*ante*, v. iii. p. 65) might not, in fact, have been *that* which occurred at Mr. Strahan's, in London, referred to by Dr. Robertson. It is clear, that, after such a parting, they never could have met in society again.—ED.]

ing is very strong, and he has a peculiar art of drawing characters, which is as rare as good portrait painting." SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS. "He is undoubtedly admirable in this: but, in order to mark the characters which he draws, he overcharges them, and gives people more than they really have, whether of good or bad."

No sooner did he, of whom we had been thus talking so easily, arrive, than we were all as quiet as a school upon the entrance of the head-master; and we very soon sat down to a table covered with such variety of good things, as contributed not a little to dispose him to be pleased.

RAMSAY. "I am old enough [1] to have been a contemporary of Pope. His poetry was highly admired in his life-time, more a great deal than after his death." JOHNSON. "Sir, it has not been less admired since his death; no authours ever had so much fame in their own life-time as Pope and Voltaire; and Pope's poetry has been as much admired since his death as during his life; it has only not been as much talked of, but that is owing to its being now more distant, and people having other writings to talk of. Virgil is less talked of than Pope, and Homer is less talked of than Virgil; but they are not less admired. We must read what the world reads at the moment. It has been maintained that this superfetation, this teeming of the press in modern times, is prejudicial to good literature, because it obliges us to read so much of what is of inferiour value, in order to be in the fashion; so that better works are neglected for want of time, because a man will have more gratification of his vanity in conversation, from having read modern books, than from having read the best works

[1] [Mr. Ramsay was just of Johnson's age.—ED.]

of antiquity. But it must be considered, that we have now more knowledge generally diffused; all our ladies read now, which is a great extension. Modern writers are the moons of literature; they shine with reflected light, with light borrowed from the ancients. Greece appears to me to be the fountain of knowledge; Rome of elegance." RAMSAY. "I suppose Homer's 'Iliad' to be a collection of pieces which had been written before his time. I should like to see a translation of it in poetical prose, like the book of Ruth or Job." ROBERTSON. "Would you, Dr. Johnson, who are a master of the English language, but try your hand upon a part of it." JOHNSON. "Sir, you would not read it without the pleasure of verse[1]."

We talked of antiquarian researches. JOHNSON. "All that is really *known* of the ancient state of Britain is contained in a few pages. We *can* know no more than what the old writers have told us; yet what large books have we upon it, the whole of which, excepting such parts as are taken from those old writers, is all a dream, such as Whitaker's 'Manchester.' I have heard Henry's 'History of Britain' well spoken of; I am told it is carried on in separate divisions, as the civil, the military, the religious history; I wish much to have one branch well done, and that is the history of manners, of common life." ROBERTSON. "Henry should have applied his attention to that alone, which is enough for any man; and he might have found a great deal scattered in various books, had he read solely with that view. Henry erred in not selling his first volume at a mo-

[1] This experiment, which Madame Dacier made in vain, has since been tried in our own language, by the editor of "Ossian," and we must either think very meanly of his abilities, or allow that Dr. Johnson was in the right. And Mr. Cowper, a man of real genius, has miserably failed in his blank verse translation.—BOSWELL.

derate price to the booksellers, that they might have pushed him on till he had got reputation. I sold my 'History of Scotland' at a moderate price, as a work by which the booksellers might either gain or not; and Cadell has told me, that Miller and he have got six thousand pounds by it. I afterwards received a much higher price for my writings. An authour should sell his first work for what the booksellers will give, till it shall appear whether he is an authour of merit, or, which is the same thing as to purchase-money, an authour who pleases the publick."

Dr. Robertson expatiated on the character of a certain nobleman [1]; that he was one of the strongest-minded men that ever lived; that he would sit in company quite sluggish, while there was nothing to call forth his intellectual vigour; but the moment that any important subject was started, for instance, how this country is to be defended against a French invasion, he would rouse himself, and show his extraordinary talents with the most powerful ability and animation. JOHNSON. "Yet this man cut his own throat. The true strong and sound mind is the mind that can embrace equally great things and small. Now I am told the King of Prussia will say to a servant, 'Bring me a bottle of such a wine, which came in such a year; it lies in such a corner of the cellars.' I would have a man great in great things, and elegant in little things." He said to me afterwards, when we were by ourselves, "Robertson was in a mighty romantick humour, he talked of one whom he did not know; but I *downed* him with the King of Prussia." "Yes, sir," said I, "you threw a *bottle* at his head."

An ingenious gentleman was mentioned, concern-

[1] [Lord Clive.—ED.]

ing whom both Robertson and Ramsay agreed that he had a constant firmness of mind; for after a laborious day, and amidst a multiplicity of cares and anxieties, he would sit down with his sisters and be quite cheerful and good-humoured. Such a disposition, it was observed, was the happy gift of nature. JOHNSON. "I do not think so: a man has from nature a certain portion of mind; the use he makes of it depends upon his own free will. That a man has always the same firmness of mind, I do not say: because every man feels his mind less firm at one time than another; but I think, a man's being in a good or bad humour depends upon his will." I, however, could not help thinking that a man's humour is often uncontrollable by his will.

Johnson harangued against drinking wine. "A man," said he, "may choose whether he will have abstemiousness and knowledge, or claret and ignorance." Dr. Robertson, (who is very companionable), was beginning to dissent as to the proscription of claret. JOHNSON (with a placid smile). "Nay, sir, you shall not differ with me; as I have said that the man is most perfect who takes in the most things, I am for knowledge and claret." ROBERTSON (holding a glass of generous claret in his hand). "Sir, I can only drink your health." JOHNSON. "Sir, I should be sorry if *you* should be ever in such a state as to be able to do nothing more." ROBERTSON. "Dr. Johnson, allow me to say, that in one respect I have the advantage of you; when you were in Scotland you would not come to hear any of our preachers, whereas, when I am here, I attend your publick worship without scruple, and, indeed, with great satisfaction." JOHNSON. "Why, sir, that is not so extraordinary: the King of Siam sent ambas-

sadors to Louis the Fourteenth, but Louis the Fourteenth sent none to the King of Siam [1]."

Here my friend for once discovered a want of knowledge or forgetfulness; for Louis the Fourteenth did send an embassy to the King of Siam [2], and the Abbé Choisi, who was employed in it, published an account of it in two volumes.

Next day, Thursday, April 30, I found him at home by himself. JOHNSON. "Well, sir, Ramsay gave us a splendid dinner. I love Ramsay. You will not find a man in whose conversation there is more instruction, more information, and more elegance, than in Ramsay's." BOSWELL. "What I admire in Ramsay, is his continuing to be so young." JOHNSON. "Why, yes, sir, it is to be admired. I value myself upon this, that there is nothing of the old man in my conversation [3]. I am now sixty-eight, and I have no more of it than at twenty-eight." BOSWELL. "But, sir, would not you wish to know old age? He who is never an old man, does not know the whole of human life; for old age is one of the divisions of it." JOHNSON. "Nay, sir, what talk is this?" BOSWELL. "I mean, sir, the Sphinx's description of it:—morning, noon, and night. I would know night, as well as morning and noon." JOHNSON. "What, sir, would you know what it is to feel the evils of old age? Would you have the gout? Would you have decrepitude?" Seeing him heated, I would not argue any farther; but I was confident that I was in the right. I would,

[1] Mrs. Piozzi confidently mentions this as having passed in Scotland.—*Anecdotes*, p. 62.—BOSWELL.

[2] The Abbé de Choisi was sent by Louis XIV. on an embassy to the King of Siam in 1683, with a view, it has been said, to convert the king of the country to Christianity.—MALONE.

[3] [Johnson, in his "Meditations" (April 20, *ante*, p. 176), congratulates himself on writing with all his usual vigour. "I have made *sermons*," says he, "as readily as formerly." Probably, those which were *left for publication* by Dr. Taylor, and written, perhaps (or some of them), at Ashbourne in the preceding autumn. See *ante*, p. 32.—HALL.]

in due time, be a Nestor, an elder of the people; and there *should* be some difference between the conversation of twenty-eight and sixty-eight[1]. A grave picture should not be gay. There is a serene, solemn, placid old age. JOHNSON. "Mrs. Thrale's mother said of me what flattered me much. A clergyman was complaining of want of society in the country where he lived; and said, 'They talk of *runts*, (that is, young cows)[2]. 'Sir (said Mrs. Salisbury), Mr. Johnson would learn to talk of runts;' meaning that I was a man who would make the most of my situation, whatever it was." He added, "I think myself a very polite man."

Piozzi, p. 27, 8. [Johnson expressed a similar opinion of his own politeness to Mrs. Thrale, and, oddly enough, on two particular occasions, in which the want of that quality seemed remarkably apparent. Dr. Johnson delighted in his own partiality for Oxford; and one day, at her house, entertained five members of the other university with various instances of the superiority of Oxford, enumerating the gigantic names of many men whom it had produced, with apparent triumph. At last Mrs. Thrale said to him, "Why there happens to be no less than five Cambridge men in the room now." "I did not," said he, "think of that till you told me; but the wolf don't count the sheep."

[1] Johnson clearly meant (what the author has often elsewhere mentioned), that he had none of the listlessness of old age, that he had the same *activity and energy of mind*, as formerly; not that a man of sixty-eight might dance in a publick assembly with as much propriety as he could at twenty-eight. His conversation being the product of much various knowledge, great acuteness, and extraordinary wit, was equally well suited to every period of life; and as in his youth it probably did not exhibit any unbecoming levity, so certainly in his later years it was totally free from the garrulity and querulousness of old age.—MALONE.

[2] Such is the signification of this word in Scotland, and it should seem in Wales. (See Skinner in *v.*) But the heifers of Scotland and Wales, when brought to England, being always smaller than those of this country, the word *runt* has acquired a secondary sense, and generally signifies a heifer diminutive in size, small beyond the ordinary growth of that animal; and in this sense alone the word is acknowledged by Dr. Johnson in his Dictionary.—MALONE.

When the company were retired, the domestic circle happened to be talking of Dr. Barnard, the provost of Eton, who died about that time; and after a long and just eulogium on his wit, his learning, and goodness of heart,—Dr. Johnson said, quite seriously, "He was the only man, too, that did justice to my good breeding; and you may observe that I am well-bred to a degree of needless scrupulosity. No man," continued he, not observing the amazement of his hearers, "no man is so cautious not to interrupt another; no man thinks it so necessary to appear attentive when others are speaking; no man so steadily refuses preference to himself, or so willingly bestows it on another, as I do; nobody holds so strongly as I do the necessity of ceremony, and the ill effects which follow the breach of it: yet people think me rude; but Barnard did me justice." "'Tis pity," said Mrs. Thrale, laughing, "that he had not heard you compliment the Cambridge men after dinner to-day!" Piozzi, p. 27, 8.

On another occasion, he had been professing that he was very attentive not to offend, and very careful to maintain the ceremonies of life; and had told Mr. Thrale, that though he had never sought to please till he was past thirty, considering the matter as hopeless, yet he had been always studious not to make enemies, by apparent preference of himself. It happened, that this curious conversation, of which Mrs. Thrale was a silent auditress, passed, in her coach, in some distant province, either Shropshire or Derbyshire; and as soon as it was over, Dr. Johnson took out of his pocket a little book and was reading, when a gentleman, of no small distinction for his birth and elegance, suddenly rode up to the carriage, and paying them all his proper compliments, was desirous not to neglect Dr. Johnson; but observing that he did not see him, tapped him gently on the p. 199, 200.

Piozzi, p. 200. shoulder. "'Tis Mr. Cholmondley," said Mr. Thrale. "Well, sir! and what if it is Mr. Cholmondley!" said the other sternly, just lifting his eyes a moment from his book, and returning to it again with renewed avidity.]

Ed. [Miss Reynolds describes these points of Johnson's character with more discrimination.

Reyn. Recol. "That Dr. Johnson possessed the essential principles of politeness and of good taste (which I suppose are the same, at least concomitant), none who knew his virtues and his genius will, I imagine, be disposed to dispute. But why they remained with him, like gold in the ore, unfashioned and unseen, except in his literary capacity, no person that I know of has made any inquiry, though in general it has been spoken of as an unaccountable inconsistency in his character. Much, too, may be said in excuse for an apparent asperity of manners which were, at times at least, the natural effect of those inherent mental infirmities to which he was subject. His corporeal defects also contributed largely to the singularity of his manners; and a little reflection on the disqualifying influence of *blindness* and *deafness* would suggest many apologies for Dr. Johnson's want of politeness. The particular instance[1] I have just mentioned, of his inability to discriminate the features of any one's face, deserves perhaps more than any other to be taken into consideration, wanting, as he did, the aid of those intelligent signs, or insinuations, which the countenance displays in social converse; and which, in their slightest degree, influence and regulate the manners of the polite, or even the common observer. And to his defective hearing, perhaps, his unaccommodating manners may be equally ascribed, which not only precluded him from the perception of the

[1] [*Ante*, vol. iii. p. 286, *n.*—Ed.]

expressive tones of the voice of others, but from hearing the boisterous sound of his own: and nothing, I believe, more conduced to fix upon his character the general stigma of ill-breeding, than his loud imperious tone of voice, which apparently heightened the slightest dissent to a tone of harsh reproof; and, with his corresponding aspect, had an intimidating influence on those who were not much acquainted with him, and excited a degree of resentment which his words in ordinary circumstances would not have provoked. I have often heard him on such occasions express great surprise, that what he had said could have given any offence. Under such disadvantages, it was not much to be wondered at that Dr. Johnson should have committed many blunders and absurdities, and excited surprise and resentment in company; one in particular I remember. Being in company with Mr. Garrick and some others, who were unknown to Dr. Johnson, he was saying something tending to the disparagement of the character or of the works of a gentleman present—I have forgot which; on which Mr. Garrick touched his foot under the table, but he still went on, and Garrick, much alarmed, touched him a second time, and, I believe, the third; at last Johnson exclaimed, 'David, David, is it you? What makes you tread on my toes so?' This little anecdote, perhaps, indicates as much the want of prudence in Dr. Johnson as the want of sight. But had he at first seen Garrick's expressive countenance, and (probably) the embarrassment of the rest of the company on the occasion, it doubtless would not have happened." Reyn. Recoll.

"It were also much to be wished, in justice to Dr. Johnson's character for good manners, that many *jocular* and *ironical* speeches which have been reported had been noted as *such*, for the information of those who were unacquainted with him. Though

Reyn. Recoll. he was fond of drawing characters, and did so *con amore*, to the delight of all who heard him, I cannot say (though he said he *loved a good hater*) that I ever heard him draw one *con odio*."]

Letters. "DR. JOHNSON TO MRS. THRALE.

"[Thursday,] 30th April, 1778.

"Since I was fetched away from Streatham, the journal [of engagements] stands thus:

Saturday, Sir Joshua.	Thursday, Old Bailey[1].
Sunday, Mr. Hoole.	Friday, Club.
Monday, Lord Lucan.	Saturday, Sir Joshua.
Tuesday, Gen. Paoli.	Sunday, Lady Lucan.
Wednesday, Mr. Ramsay.	

"Monday. Pray let it be Streatham, and very early; do, now, let it be very early. For I may be carried away—just like Ganymede of Troy.

* * * * * *

"Do, now, let me know whether you will send for me—early—on Monday. But take some care, or your letter will not come till Tuesday."

On Saturday, May 2, I dined with him at Sir Joshua Reynolds's, where there was a very large company, and a great deal of conversation; but, owing to some circumstance which I cannot now recollect, I have no record of any part of it, except that there were several people there by no means of the Johnsonian school; so that less attention was paid to him than usual, which put him out of humour: and upon some imaginary offence[2] from me, he

[1] [There is a dinner given at the Old Bailey to the judges, council, and a few guests—perhaps it was to one of these dinners that Johnson was invited.—After the foregoing note had been written, the Editor learned that the venerable Mr. Chamberlain Clarke, now in his ninety-first year, remembers to have taken Johnson to this dinner, he being then sheriff. The judges were Blackstone and Eyre. Mr. Justice Blackstone conversed with Johnson on the subject of their absent friend, Sir Robert Chambers.—ED.]

[2] [Lord Wellesley has been so obliging as to give the Editor the following account of the cause of this quarrel: "Boswell, one day at Sir Joshua's table, chose to pronounce a high-flown panegyric on the wits of Queen Anne's reign, and exclaimed, 'How delightful it must have been to have lived in the society of Pope, Swift, Arbuthnot, Gay, and Bolingbroke! We have no such society in our days.' SIR JOSHUA. 'I think, Mr. Boswell, you might be satisfied with your great friend's conversation.' JOHNSON. 'Nay, sir, Boswell is right;

attacked me with such rudeness, that I was vexed and angry, because it gave those persons an opportunity of enlarging upon his supposed ferocity, and ill treatment of his best friends. I was so much hurt, and had my pride so much roused, that I kept away from him for a week; and, perhaps, might have kept away much longer, nay, gone to Scotland without seeing him again, had not we fortunately met and been reconciled. To such unhappy chances are human friendships liable.

On Friday, May 8, I dined with him at Mr. Langton's. I was reserved and silent, which I suppose he perceived, and might recollect the cause. After dinner, when Mr. Langton was called out of the room, and we were by ourselves, he drew his chair near to mine, and said, in a tone of conciliating courtesy, "Well, how have you done?" BOSWELL. "Sir, you have made me very uneasy by your behaviour to me when we were last at Sir Joshua Reynolds's. You know, my dear sir, no man has a greater respect and affection for you, or would sooner go to the end of the world to serve you. Now to treat me so—." He insisted that I had interrupted, which I assured him was not the case; and proceeded—"But why treat me so before people who neither love you nor me?" JOHNSON. "Well, I am sorry for it. I'll make it up to you twenty different ways, as you please." BOSWELL. "I said to-day to Sir Joshua, when he ob-

every man wishes for preferment, and if Boswell had lived in those days, he would have obtained promotion.' SIR JOSHUA. 'How so, sir?' JOHNSON. 'Sir, he would have had a high place in the Dunciad.' This anecdote Lord Wellesley heard from Mr. Thomas Sydenham, who received it from Mr. Knight, on the authority of Sir Joshua Reynolds himself." The Editor, however, suspects that this is but another version of the repartee of the same kind, in reference to the Dunciad, made in Sir Joshua's presence, though not at his house, some years before (see *ante*, vol. ii. p. 86). Johnson's playful retort seems so much less offensive than fifty others, that Boswell relates himself to have endured patiently, that it is improbable that he should have resented it so deeply. The anecdote, in passing through the hands of Mr. Knight and Mr. Sydenham, may have lost its true date, and acquired something beyond its true expression.—ED.]

served that you *tossed* me sometimes, I don't care how often, or how high he tosses me, when only friends are present, for then I fall upon soft ground; but I do not like falling on stones, which is the case when enemies are present. I think this a pretty good image, sir." JOHNSON. "Sir, it is one of the happiest I have ever heard[1]."

The truth is, there was no venom in the wounds which he inflicted at any time, unless they were irritated by some malignant infusion by other hands. We were instantly as cordial again as ever, and joined in hearty laugh at some ludicrous but innocent peculiarities of one of our friends. BOSWELL. "Do you think, sir, it is always culpable to laugh at a man to his face?" JOHNSON. "Why, sir, that depends upon the man and the thing. If it is a slight man, and a slight thing, you may; for you take nothing valuable from him."

He said, "I read yesterday Dr. Blair's sermon on devotion, from the text 'Cornelius, a devout man.' His doctrine is the best limited, the best expressed: there is the most warmth without fanaticism, the most rational transport. There is one part of it which I disapprove, and I'd have him correct it; which is, that 'he who does not feel joy in religion is far from the kingdom of heaven!' there are many good men whose fear of God predominates over their love. It may discourage. It was rashly said[2]. A noble sermon it

[1] [The simplicity with which Boswell repeats this flattery, without seeing that it was only a *peace-offering*, is very characteristic and amusing.—ED.]

[2] [The passage referred to is, "Of what nature must that man's religion be, who professes to worship God and to believe in Christ, and yet raises his thoughts towards God and his Saviour without any *warmth of gratitude or love*? This is not the man whom you would choose for your *bosom friend*, or whose heart you would expect to answer with *reciprocal warmth to yours*; such a person must *as yet* be far from the kingdom of heaven."—*Blair's Sermons*, vol. i. p. 261. Dr. Johnson's remark is certainly just; and it may be, moreover, observed that, from Blair's expressions, and his reference to *human friendships and affections*, he might be understood to mean, that unless we feel the *same kind*

is indeed. I wish Blair would come over to the church of England."

When Mr. Langton returned to us, the "flow of talk went on." An eminent authour[1] being mentioned: JOHNSON. "He is not a pleasant man. His conversation is neither instructive nor brilliant. He does not talk as if impelled by any fulness of knowledge or vivacity of imagination. His conversation is like that of any other sensible man. He talks with no wish either to inform or to hear, but only because he thinks it does not become —— —— to sit in a company and say nothing."

Mr. Langton having repeated the anecdote of Addison having distinguished between his powers in conversation and in writing, by saying "I have only ninepence in my pocket; but I can draw for a thousand pounds;"—JOHNSON. "He had not that retort ready, sir; he had prepared it before-hand." LANGTON (turning to me). "A fine surmise. Set a thief to catch a thief."

Johnson called the East Indians barbarians. BOSWELL. "You will except the Chinese, sir?" JOHNSON. "No, sir." BOSWELL. "Have they not arts?" JOHNSON. "They have pottery." BOSWELL. "What do you say to the written characters of their language?" JOHNSON. "Sir, they have not an alphabet. They have not been able to form what all other nations have formed." BOSWELL. "There is more learning in their language than in any other, from the immense number of their characters." JOHNSON. "It is only more difficult from its rudeness; as there is more

of "warmth" and affection towards God that we do towards the objects of human love, we are far from the kingdom of heaven—an idea which seems to countenance fanaticism, and which every sober-minded christian feels to be a mere play on words; for the love of God and the love of one's wife and friend are certainly not the *same* passion.—ED.]

[1] [Probably Dr. Robertson.—ED.]

labour in hewing down a tree with a stone than with an axe."

He said, "I have been reading Lord Kames's 'Sketches of the History of Man.' In treating of severity of punishment, he mentions that of Madame Lapouchin, in Russia, but he does not give it fairly; for I have looked at *Chappe D'Auteroche*, from whom he has taken it. He stops where it is said that the spectators thought her innocent, and leaves out what follows; that she nevertheless was guilty. Now this is being as culpable as one can conceive, to misrepresent fact in a book, and for what motive? It is like one of those lies which people tell, one cannot see why. The woman's life was spared; and no punishment was too great for the favourite of an empress, who had conspired to dethrone her mistress." BOSWELL. "He was only giving a picture of the lady in her sufferings." JOHNSON. "Nay, don't endeavour to palliate this. Guilt is a principal feature in the picture. Kames is puzzled with a question that puzzled me when I was a very young man. Why is it that the interest of money is lower, when money is plentiful; for five pounds has the same proportion of value to a hundred pounds when money is plentiful, as when it is scarce? A lady explained it to me. It is (said she) because when money is plentiful there are so many more who have money to lend, that they bid down one another. Many have then a hundred pounds; and one says—Take mine rather than another's, and you shall have it at four *per cent.*" BOSWELL. "Does Lord Kames decide the question?" JOHNSON. "I think he leaves it as he found it." BOSWELL. "This must have been an extraordinary lady who instructed you, sir. May I ask who she was?" JOHNSON. "Molly

Aston [1], sir, the sister of those ladies with whom you dined at Lichfield.——I shall be at home to-morrow." BOSWELL. "Then let us dine by ourselves at the Mitre, to keep up the old custom, 'the custom of the manor,' custom of the Mitre." JOHNSON. "Sir, so it shall be."

[Dr. Johnson had however an avowed and scarcely limited partiality for all who bore the name or boasted the alliance of an Aston or a Hervey; [but above all for Miss Mary Aston, whom he has celebrated in his criticisms on Pope's epitaphs, as a lady of great beauty and elegance.] And when Mr. Thrale once asked him which had been the happiest period of his past life? he replied, it was that year in which he spent one whole evening with Molly Aston. "That indeed," said he, "was not happiness, it was rapture; but the thoughts of it sweetened the whole year." Mrs. Piozzi observes, that the evening alluded to was not passed *tête-à-tête*, but in a select company, of which the present Lord Kilmorey [2] was one. "Molly," said Dr. Johnson, "was a beauty and a scholar, and Piozzi, p. 120.

[1] Johnson had an extraordinary admiration of this lady, notwithstanding she was a violent whig. In answer to her high-flown speeches for *liberty*, he addressed to her the following epigram, of which I presume to offer a translation:

"Liber ut esse velim, suasisti pulchra Maria,
Ut maneam liber—pulchra Maria, vale!"

Adieu, Maria! since you 'd have me free:
For, who beholds thy charms, a slave must be.

A correspondent of "The Gentleman's Magazine," who subscribes himself SCIOLUS, to whom I am indebted for several excellent remarks, observes, "The turn of Dr. Johnson's lines to Miss Aston, whose whig principles he had been combating, appears to me to be taken from an ingenious epigram in the 'Menagiana,' vol. iii. p. 376, edit. 1716, on a young lady who appeared at a masquerade, *habillée en Jesuite*, during the fierce contentions of the followers of Molinos and Jansenius concerning free-will:

"On s'etonne ici que Caliste
Ait pris l'habit de Moliniste.
Puisque cette jeune beauté
Ote a chacun sa liberté
N'est-ce pas une Janseniste?"—BOSWELL.

[2] [See *ante*, vol. iii. p. 131, *n.*, where Lord Kilmorey should have been stated to be *John*, the *tenth* viscount.—ED.]

Piozzi, p. 121. a wit and a whig; and she talked all in praise of liberty: and so I made that epigram upon her—She was the loveliest creature I ever saw!

Mrs. Piozzi asked him what his wife thought of this attachment? "She was jealous, to be sure," said he, "and teased me sometimes, when I would let her; and one day, as a fortune-telling gipsy passed us, when we were walking out in company with two or three friends in the country, she made the wench look at my hand, but soon repented her curiosity; for, says the gipsy, your heart is divided, sir, between a Betty and a Molly: Betty loves you best, but you take most delight in Molly's company: when I turned about to laugh, I saw my wife was crying. Pretty charmer! she had no reason!"]

On Saturday, May 9, we fulfilled our purpose of dining by ourselves at the Mitre, according to the old custom. There was, on these occasions, a little circumstance of kind attention to Mrs. Williams, which must not be omitted. Before coming out, and leaving her to dine alone, he gave her her choice of a chicken, a sweetbread, or any other little nice thing, which was carefully sent to her from the tavern ready drest.

Our conversation to-day, I know not how, turned, I think, for the only time at any length, during our long acquaintance, upon the sensual intercourse between the sexes, the delight of which he ascribed chiefly to imagination. "Were it not for imagination, sir," said he, "a man would be as happy in the arms of a chambermaid as of a duchess. But such is the adventitious charm of fancy, that we find men who have violated the best principles of society, and ruined their fame and their fortune, that they might possess a woman of rank." It would not be proper to record

the particulars of such a conversation in moments of unreserved frankness, when nobody was present on whom it could have any hurtful effect. That subject, when philosophically treated, may surely employ the mind in a curious discussion, and as innocently as anatomy; provided that those who do treat it keep clear of inflammatory incentives.

"From grave to gay, from lively to severe,"—we were soon engaged in very different speculation; humbly and reverently considering and wondering at the universal mystery of all things, as our imperfect faculties can now judge of them. "There are," said he, "innumerable questions to which the inquisitive mind can in this state receive no answer: Why do you and I exist? Why was this world created? Since it was to be created, why was it not created sooner?"

On Sunday, May 10, I supped with him at Mr. Hoole's, with Sir Joshua Reynolds. I have neglected the memorial of this evening, so as to remember no more of it than two particulars: one that he strenuously opposed an argument by Sir Joshua, that virtue was preferable to vice, considering this life only; and that a man would be virtuous were it only to preserve his character; and that he expressed much wonder at the curious formation of the bat, a mouse with wings; saying, that it was almost as strange a thing in physiology, as if the fabulous dragon could be seen.

On Tuesday, May 12, I waited on the Earl of Marchmont, to know if his lordship would favour Dr. Johnson with information concerning Pope, whose Life he was about to write. Johnson had not flattered himself with the hopes of receiving any civility from this nobleman; for he said to me, when I mentioned Lord Marchmont as one who could tell him a great deal about Pope,—"Sir, he will tell *me*

nothing." I had the honour of being known to his lordship, and applied to him of myself, without being commissioned by Johnson. His lordship behaved in the most polite and obliging manner, promised to tell all he recollected about Pope, and was so very courteous as to say, "Tell Dr. Johnson I have a great respect for him, and am ready to show it in any way I can. I am to be in the city to-morrow, and will call at his house as I return." His lordship however asked, "Will he write the 'Lives of the Poets' impartially? He was the first that brought whig and tory into a dictionary. And what do you think of the definition of Excise? Do you know the history of his aversion to the word *transpire?*" Then taking down the folio Dictionary, he showed it with this censure on its secondary sense: 'To escape from secrecy to notice; a sense lately innovated from France, without necessity[1].' "The truth was, Lord Bolingbroke, who left the Jacobites, first used it; therefore it was to be condemned. He should have shown what word would do for it, if it was unnecessary." I afterwards put the question to Johnson: "Why, sir," said he, "*get abroad.*" BOSWELL. "That, sir, is using two words." JOHNSON. "Sir, there is no end to this. You may as well insist to have a word for old age." BOSWELL. "Well, sir, *senectus.*" JOHNSON. "Nay, sir, to insist always that there should be one word to express a thing in English, because there is one in another language, is to change the language."

[1] [Few words, however, of modern introduction have had greater success than this—for it is not only in general, but even in vulgar use. Johnson's awkward substitute of "*get abroad*" does not seem to express exactly the same meaning: a secret may *get abroad* by design, by accident, by breach of confidence; but it is said to *transpire* when it becomes known by small indirect circumstances—by symptoms—by inferences. It is now often used in the direct sense of "*get abroad,*" but, as appears to the editor, incorrectly.—ED.]

I availed myself of this opportunity to hear from his lordship many particulars both of Pope and Lord Bolingbroke, which I have in writing.

I proposed to Lord Marchmont, that he should revise Johnson's Life of Pope: "So," said his lordship, "you would put me in a dangerous situation. You know he knocked down Osborne, the bookseller[1]."

Elated with the success of my spontaneous exertion to procure material and respectable aid to Johnson for his very favourite work, "the Lives of the Poets," I hastened down to Mr. Thrale's, at Streatham, where he now was, that I might ensure his being at home next day; and after dinner, when I thought he would receive the good news in the best humour, I announced it eagerly: "I have been at work for you to-day, sir. I have been with Lord Marchmont. He bade me tell you he has a great respect for you, and will call on you to-morrow at one o'clock, and communicate all he knows about Pope." Here I paused, in full expectation that he would be pleased with this intelligence, would praise my active merit, and would be alert to embrace such an offer from a nobleman. But whether I had shown an over-exultation, which provoked his spleen; or whether he was seized with a suspicion that I had obtruded him on Lord Marchmont, and humbled him too much; or whether there was any thing more than an unlucky fit of ill-humour, I know not; but to my surprise the result was,—JOHNSON. "I shall not be in town to-morrow. I don't care to know about Pope." MRS. THRALE: (surprised as I was, and a little angry). "I suppose, sir, Mr. Boswell thought, that as you are to write Pope's Life, you would wish to know about him." JOHNSON. "Wish! why yes.

[1] [See *ante*, vol. i. p. 129.—ED.]

If it rained knowledge, I 'd hold out my hand; but I would not give myself the trouble to go in quest of it." There was no arguing with him at the moment. Some time afterwards he said, "Lord Marchmont will call on me, and then I shall call on Lord Marchmont." Mrs. Thrale was uneasy at his unaccountable[1] caprice; and told me, that if I did not take care to bring about a meeting between Lord Marchmont and him, it would never take place, which would be a great pity. I sent a card to his lordship, to be left at Johnson's house, acquainting him, that Dr. Johnson could not be in town next day, but would do himself the honour of waiting on him at another time. I give this account fairly, as a specimen of that unhappy temper with which this great and good man had occasionally to struggle, from something morbid in his constitution. Let the most censorious of my readers suppose himself to have a violent fit of the toothach or to have received a severe stroke on the shin-bone, and when in such a state to be asked a question; and if he has any candour, he will not be surprised at the answers which Johnson sometimes gave in moments of irritation, which, let me assure them, is exquisitely painful. But it must not be erroneously supposed that he was, in the smallest degree, careless concerning any work which he undertook, or that he was generally thus peevish. It will be seen that in the following year he had a very agreeable interview with Lord Marchmont at his lordship's house; and this very afternoon he soon forgot any fretfulness, and fell into conversation as usual.

I mentioned a reflection having been thrown out

[1] [Not quite so unaccountable as Mr. Boswell seems to think. *His* intervention in this affair, *unsolicited* and *unauthorized*, exhibits the bustling vanity of his own character, and Johnson very judiciously declined being dragged before Lord Marchmont by so headlong a master of the ceremonies.—Ed.]

against four peers for having presumed to rise in opposition to the opinion of the twelve judges, in a cause in the house of lords, as if that were indecent. JOHNSON. "Sir, there is no ground for censure. The peers are judges themselves: and supposing them really to be of a different opinion, they might from duty be in opposition to the judges, who were there only to be consulted."

In this observation I fully concurred with him; for, unquestionably, all the peers are vested with the highest judicial powers; and when they are confident that they understand a cause, are not obliged, nay, ought not to acquiesce in the opinion of the ordinary law judges, or even in that of those who from their studies and experience are called the law lords. I consider the peers in general as I do a jury, who ought to listen with respectful attention to the sages of the law; but if, after hearing them, they have a firm opinion of their own, are bound, as honest men, to decide accordingly. Nor is it so difficult for them to understand even law questions as is generally thought, provided they will bestow sufficient attention upon them. This observation was made by my honoured relation the late Lord Cathcart, who had spent his life in camps and courts; yet assured me, that he could form a clear opinion upon most of the causes that came before the house of lords, "as they were so well enucleated in the Cases."

Mrs. Thrale told us, that a curious clergyman of our acquaintance had discovered a licentious stanza, which Pope had originally in his "Universal Prayer," before the stanza,

> "What conscience dictates to be done,
> Or warns us not to do," &c.

It was this:

"Can sins of moment claim the rod
Of everlasting fires?
And that offend great Nature's God
Which Nature's self inspires?"

and that Dr. Johnson observed, "it had been borrowed from *Guarini*." There are, indeed, in *Pastor Fido*, many such flimsy superficial reasonings as that in the last two lines of this stanza.

BOSWELL. "In that stanza of Pope's, '*rod of fires*' is certainly a bad metaphor." MRS. THRALE. "And 'sins of *moment*' is a faulty expression; for its true import is *momentous*, which cannot be intended." JOHNSON. "It must have been written 'of *moments*.' Of *moment*, is *momentous*; of *moments*, *momentary*. I warrant you, however, Pope wrote this stanza, and some friend struck it out. Boileau wrote some such thing, and Arnaud struck it out, saying, '*Vous gagnerez deux ou trois impies, et perdrez je ne sçais combien d'honettes gens.*' These fellows want to say a daring thing, and don't know how to go about it. Mere poets know no more of fundamental principles than—." Here he was interrupted somehow. Mrs. Thrale mentioned Dryden. JOHNSON. "He puzzled himself about predestination. How foolish was it in Pope to give all his friendship to lords, who thought they honoured him by being with him; and to choose such lords as Burlington, and Cobham, and Bolingbroke! Bathurst was negative, a pleasing man; and I have heard no ill of Marchmont. And then always saying, 'I do not value you for being a lord;' which was a sure proof that he did. I never say I do not value Boswell more for being born to an estate, because I do not care." BOSWELL. "Nor for being a Scotchman?" "Nay, sir, I do value you more for being a Scotchman. You are a Scotchman without the

faults of Scotchmen. You would not have been so valuable as you are had you not been a Scotchman."

Talking of divorces, I asked if Othello's doctrine was not plausible;

> "He that is robb'd, not wanting what is stolen,
> Let him not know 't, and he 's not robb'd at all."

Dr. Johnson and Mrs. Thrale joined against this. JOHNSON. "Ask any man if he 'd wish not to know of such an injury." BOSWELL. "Would you tell your friend to make him unhappy?" JOHNSON. "Perhaps, sir, I should not; but that would be from prudence on my own account. A man would tell his father." BOSWELL. "Yes; because he would not have spurious children to get any share of the family inheritance." MRS. THRALE. "Or he would tell his brother." BOSWELL. "Certainly his *elder* brother." JOHNSON. "You would tell your friend of a woman's infamy, to prevent his marrying a prostitute: there is the same reason to tell him of his wife's infidelity when he is married, to prevent the consequences of imposition. It is a breach of confidence not to tell a friend." BOSWELL. "Would you tell Mr. ———?" (naming a gentleman[1] who assuredly was not in the least danger of such a miserable disgrace, though married to a fine woman.) JOHNSON. "No, sir; because it would do no good: he is so sluggish, he 'd never go to parliament and get through a divorce."

He said of one[2] of our friends, "He is ruining himself without pleasure. A man who loses at play, or who runs out his fortune at court, makes his estate less, in hopes of making it bigger (I am sure of this

[1] [The editor declines to attempt supplying this name. He fears that it will be but too evident at whose expense Mr. Boswell chose to make so offensive an hypothesis.—ED.]

[2] [No doubt Mr. Langton.—ED.]

word, which was often used by him): but it is a sad thing to pass through the quagmire of parsimony to the gulf of ruin. To pass over the flowery path of extravagance is very well."

Amongst the numerous prints pasted on the walls of the dining-room at Streatham was Hogarth's "Modern Midnight Conversation." I asked him what he knew of Parson Ford, who made a conspicuous figure in the riotous group. JOHNSON. "Sir, he was my acquaintance and relation, my mother's nephew. He had purchased a living in the country, but not simoniacally. I never saw him but in the country. I have been told he was a man of great parts; very profligate, but I never heard he was impious." BOSWELL. "Was there not a story of his ghost having appeared?" JOHNSON. "Sir, it was believed. A waiter at the Hummums, in which house Ford died, had been absent for some time, and returned, not knowing that Ford was dead. Going down to the cellar, according to the story, he met him; going down again, he met him a second time. When he came up, he asked some of the people of the house what Ford could be doing there. They told him Ford was dead. The waiter took a fever, in which he lay for some time. When he recovered, he said he had a message to deliver to some women from Ford; but he was not to tell what, or to whom. He walked out; he was followed; but somewhere about St. Paul's they lost him. He came back, and said he had delivered the message, and the women exclaimed, 'Then we are all undone!' Dr. Pellet, who was not a credulous man, inquired into the truth of this story, and he said the evidence was irresistible. My wife went to the Hummums; (it is a place where people get themselves cupped.) I believe she went with intention to hear about this story of Ford.

At first they were unwilling to tell her; but, after they had talked to her, she came away satisfied that it was true. To be sure, the man had a fever; and this vision may have been the beginning of it. But if the message to the women, and their behaviour upon it, were true as related, there was something supernatural. That rests upon his word; and there it remains."

After Mrs. Thrale was gone to bed, Johnson and I sat up late. We resumed Sir Joshua Reynolds's argument on the preceding Sunday, that a man would be virtuous, though he had no other motive than to preserve his character. JOHNSON. "Sir, it is not true; for, as to this world, vice does not hurt a man's character." BOSWELL. "Yes, sir, debauching a friend's wife will." JOHNSON. "No, sir. Who thinks the worse of ——[1] for it?" BOSWELL. "Lord ———[2] was not his friend." JOHNSON. "That is only a circumstance, sir; a slight distinction. He could not get into the house but by Lord ———[2]. A man is chosen knight of the shire not the less for having debauched ladies." BOSWELL. "What, sir, if he debauched the ladies of gentlemen in the county, will not there be a general resentment against him?" JOHNSON. "No, sir. He will lose those particular gentlemen; but the rest will not trouble their heads about it" (warmly). BOSWELL. "Well, sir, I cannot think so." JOHNSON. "Nay, sir, there is no talking with a man who will dispute what every body knows (angrily). Don't you know this?" BOSWELL. "No, sir; and I wish to think better of your country than you represent it. I knew in Scotland a gentleman obliged to leave it for debauching a lady; and in one of our counties an earl's

[1] [Mr. Beauclerk. See *ante*, v. ii. p. 230. *n.*—ED.]
[2] [Bolingbroke. See as above.—ED.]

brother lost his election because he had debauched the lady of another earl in that county, and destroyed the peace of a noble family."

Still he would not yield. He proceeded: "Will you not allow, sir, that vice does not hurt a man's character so as to obstruct his prosperity in life, when you know that ——————[1] was loaded with wealth and honours? a man who had acquired his fortune by such crimes, that his consciousness of them impelled him to cut his own throat." BOSWELL. "You will recollect, sir, that Dr. Robertson said he cut his throat because he was weary of still life; little things not being sufficient to move his great mind." JOHNSON (very angry). "Nay, sir, what stuff is this! You had no more this opinion after Robertson said it than before. I know nothing more offensive than repeating what one knows to be foolish things, by way of continuing a dispute, to see what a man will answer, —to make him your butt!" (angrier still.) BOSWELL. "My dear sir, I had no such intention as you seem to suspect; I had not indeed. Might not this nobleman have felt every thing 'weary, stale, flat, and unprofitable,' as Hamlet says?" JOHNSON. "Nay, if you are to bring in *gabble*, I 'll talk no more. I will not, upon my honour." My readers will decide upon this dispute.

Next morning I stated to Mrs. Thrale at breakfast, before he came down, the dispute of last night as to the influence of character upon success in life. She said he was certainly wrong; and told me that a baronet lost an election in Wales because he had debauched the sister of a gentleman in the county, whom he made one of his daughters invite as her companion at his seat in the country, when his lady

[1] [Lord Clive. See *ante*, p. 195.—ED.]

and his other children were in London. But she would not encounter Johnson upon the subject.

I staid all this day with him at Streatham. He talked a great deal in very good humour.

Looking at Messrs. Dilly's splendid edition of Lord Chesterfield's miscellaneous works, he laughed, and said, "Here are now two speeches ascribed to him, both of which were written by me: and the best of it is, they have found out that one is like Demosthenes, and the other like Cicero[1]."

He censured Lord Kames's "Sketches of the History of Man," for misrepresenting Clarendon's account of the appearance of Sir George Villiers's ghost, as if Clarendon were weakly credulous; when the truth is, that Clarendon only says, that the story was upon a better foundation of credit than usually such discourses are founded upon; nay, speaks thus of the person who was reported to have seen the vision, "the poor man, *if he had been at all waking;*" which Lord Kames has omitted[2]. He added, "In this book it is maintained that virtue is natural to man, and that if we would but consult our own hearts, we should be virtuous. Now, after consulting our own hearts all we can, and with all the helps we have, we find how few of us are virtuous. This is saying a thing which all mankind know not to be true." BOSWELL. "Is not modesty natural?" JOHNSON. "I cannot say, sir, as we find no people quite in a state of nature; but, I think, the more they are taught, the more modest they are. The French are a gross, ill-bred, untaught people; a lady there will spit on the floor and rub it with her foot. What I gained by being in France was, learning to be better satisfied with my own country. Time may be em-

[1] [See *ante*, vol. i. p. 126.—ED.]

[2] [This suppression is particularly blameable, because the question was as to the extent of Clarendon's credulity. See also *ante*, p. 206.—ED.]

ployed to more advantage from nineteen to twenty-four, almost in any way than in travelling. When you set travelling against mere negation, against doing nothing, it is better to be sure; but how much more would a young man improve were he to study during those years. Indeed, if a young man is wild, and must run after women and bad company, it is better this should be done abroad, as, on his return, he can break off such connexions, and begin at home a new man, with a character to form, and acquaintance to make. 'How little does travelling supply to the conversation of any man who has travelled; how little to Beauclerk!" BOSWELL. "What say you to Lord ———[1]?" JOHNSON. "I never but once heard him talk of what he had seen, and that was of a large serpent in one of the pyramids of Egypt." BOSWELL. "Well, I happened to hear him tell the same thing, which made me mention him."

I talked of a country life. JOHNSON. "Were I to live in the country, I would not devote myself to the acquisition of popularity; I would live in a much better way, much more happily; I would have my time at my own command." BOSWELL. "But, sir, is it not a sad thing to be at a distance from all our literary friends?" JOHNSON. "Sir, you will by-and-by have enough of this conversation, which now delights you so much."

As he was a zealous friend of subordination, he was at all times watchful to repress the vulgar cant against the manners of the great. "High people, sir," said he, "are the best: take a hundred ladies of quality, you 'll find them better wives, better mothers, more willing to sacrifice their own pleasure to their children, than a hundred other women. Tradeswomen (I mean the wives of tradesmen) in the city,

[1] [Charlemont. His lordship was in the habit of telling the story alluded to rather too often.—ED.]

who are worth from ten to fifteen thousand pounds, are the worst creatures upon the earth, grossly ignorant, and thinking viciousness fashionable. Farmers, I think, are often worthless fellows. Few lords will cheat; and, if they do, they 'll be ashamed of it: farmers cheat, and are not ashamed of it: they have all the sensual vices too of the nobility, with cheating into the bargain. There is as much fornication and adultery amongst farmers as amongst noblemen." BOSWELL. "The notion of the world, sir, however, is, that the morals of women of quality are worse than those in lower stations." JOHNSON. "Yes, sir; the licentiousness of one woman of quality makes more noise than that of a number of women in lower stations: then, sir, you are to consider the malignity of women in the city against women of quality, which will make them believe any thing of them, such as that they call their coachmen to bed. No, sir; so far as I have observed, the higher in rank, the richer ladies are, they are the better instructed, and the more virtuous."

This year the Reverend Mr. Horne published his "Letter to Mr. Dunning on the English Particle." Johnson read it, and though not treated in it with sufficient respect, he had candour enough to say to Mr. Seward, "Were I to make a new edition of my Dictionary, I would adopt several[1] of Mr. Horne's etymologies. I hope they did not put the dog in the pillory for his libel; he has too much literature for that[2]."

On Saturday, May 16, I dined with him at Mr.

[1] In Mr. Horne Tooke's enlargement of that "Letter," which he has since published with the title of "Επεα πτεροεντα, or, The Diversions of Purley," he mentions this compliment, as if Dr. Johnson, instead of *several* of his etymologies, had said *all*. His recollection having thus magnified it, shows how ambitious he was of the approbation of so great a man.—BOSWELL.

[2] [See *ante*, p. 174. The editor cannot account for Johnson's ignorance of the sentence—any more than for the inconsistency between the wishes expressed in this and the former passage.—ED.]

Beauclerk's with Mr. Langton, Mr. Steevens, Dr. Higgins, and some others. I regret very feelingly every instance of my remissness in recording his *memorabilia;* I am afraid it is the condition of humanity (as Mr. Windham, of Norfolk, once observed to me, after having made an admirable speech in the house of commons, which was highly applauded, but which he afterwards perceived might have been better), "that we are more uneasy from thinking of our wants, than happy in thinking of our acquisitions." This is an unreasonable mode of disturbing our tranquillity, and should be corrected: let me then comfort myself with the large treasure of Johnson's conversation which I have preserved for my own enjoyment and that of the world, and let me exhibit what I have upon each occasion, whether more or less, whether a bulse, or only a few sparks of a diamond.

He said, "Dr. Mead lived more in the broad sunshine of life than almost any man."

The disaster of General Burgoyne's army[1] was then the common topick of conversation. It was asked why piling their arms was insisted upon as a matter of such consequence, when it seemed to be a circumstance so inconsiderable in itself. JOHNSON. "Why, sir, a French authour says, '*Il y a beaucoup de puerilités dans la guerre.*' All distinctions are trifles, because great things can seldom occur, and those distinctions are settled by custom. A savage would as willingly have his meat sent to him in the kitchen, as eat it at the table here: as men become civilised, various modes of denoting honourable preference are invented."

He this day made the observations upon the similarity between "Rasselas" and "Candide:" which I

[1] [Its surrender at Saratoga, March, 1778.—ED.]

have inserted in its proper place, when considering his admirable philosophical romance. He said, "Candide" he thought had more power in it than any thing that Voltaire had written.

He said, "The lyrical part of Horace never can be perfectly translated; so much of the excellence is in the numbers and expression. Francis has done it the best; I'll take his, five out of six, against them all."

On Sunday, May 17, I presented to him Mr. Fullarton, of Fullarton, who has since distinguished himself so much in India, to whom he naturally talked of travels, as Mr. Brydone accompanied him in his tour to Sicily and Malta. He said, "The information which we have from modern travellers is much more authentick than what we had from ancient travellers: ancient travellers guessed; modern travellers measure. The Swiss admit that there is but one errour in Stanyan. If Brydone were more attentive to his Bible, he would be a good traveller."

He said, "Lord Chatham was a *Dictator;* he possessed the power of putting the state in motion; now there is no power, all order is relaxed." BOSWELL. "Is there no hope of a change to the better?" JOHNSON. "Why, yes, sir, when we are weary of this relaxation. So the city of London will appoint its mayors again by seniority." BOSWELL. "But is not that taking a mere chance for having a good or a bad mayor?" JOHNSON. "Yes, sir; but the evil of competition is greater than that of the worst mayor that can come: besides, there is no more reason to suppose that the choice of a rabble will be right, than that chance will be right."

On Tuesday, May 19, I was to set out for Scotland in the evening. He was engaged to dine with me at Mr. Dilly's; I waited upon him to remind

him of his appointment and attend him thither; he gave me some salutary counsel, and recommended vigorous resolution against any deviation from moral duty. BOSWELL. "But you would not have me to bind myself by a solemn obligation?" JOHNSON (much agitated). "What! a vow!—O, no, sir, a vow is a horrible thing! it is a snare for sin. The man who cannot go to heaven without a vow, may go—[1]." Here, standing erect in the middle of his library, and rolling grand, his pause was truly a curious compound of the solemn and the ludicrous: he half-whistled in his usual way when pleasant, and he paused as if checked by religious awe. Methought he would have added, to hell, but was restrained. I humoured the dilemma. "What, sir!" said I, "'*In cœlum jusseris ibit?*'" alluding to his imitation of it,

Juv. 3 Sat.

"And bid him go to hell, to hell he goes."

I had mentioned to him a slight fault in his noble "Imitation of the Tenth Satire of Juvenal," a too near recurrence of the verb *spread* in his description of the young enthusiast at college:

"Through all his veins the fever of renown
Spreads from the strong contagion of the gown;
O'er Bodley's dome his future labours *spread*,
And Bacon's mansion trembles o'er his head."

He had desired me to change *spreads* to *burns;* but for perfect authenticity, I now had it done with his own hand[2]. I thought this alteration not only cured the fault, but was more poetical, as it might carry an allusion to the shirt by which Hercules was inflamed.

We had a quiet, comfortable meeting at Mr. Dilly's;

[1] [See *ante*, vol. ii. p. 24.—ED.]

[2] The slip of paper on which he made the correction is deposited by me in the noble library to which it relates, and to which I have presented other pieces of his handwriting.—BOSWELL.

nobody there but ourselves. Mr. Dilly mentioned somebody having wished that Milton's "Tractate on Education" should be printed along with his Poems in the edition of the English Poets then going on. JOHNSON. "It would be breaking in upon the plan; but would be of no great consequence. So far as it would be any thing, it would be wrong. Education in England has been in danger of being hurt by two of its greatest men, Milton and Locke. Milton's plan is impracticable, and I suppose has never been tried. Locke's, I fancy, has been tried often enough, but is very imperfect; it gives too much to one side, and too little to the other; it gives too little to literature.—I shall do what I can for Dr. Watts; but my materials are very scanty. His poems are by no means his best works; I cannot praise his poetry itself highly; but I can praise its design."

My illustrious friend and I parted with assurances of affectionate regard.

I wrote to him on the 25th of May, from Thorpe, in Yorkshire, one of the seats of Mr. Bosville, and gave him an account of my having passed a day at Lincoln, unexpectedly, and therefore without having any letters of introduction, but that I had been honoured with civilities from the Reverend Mr. Simpson, an acquaintance of his[1], and Captain Broadley, of the Lincolnshire militia; but more particularly from the Reverend Dr. Gordon, the chancellor, who first received me with great politeness as a stranger, and, when I informed him who I was, entertained me at his house with the most flattering attention: I also expressed the pleasure with which I had found that our worthy friend, Langton, was highly esteemed in his own county town.

[1] [Probably brother of the gentleman to whom he addressed the letter, *ante*, vol. i. p. 336, and vol. iii. p. 393.—ED.]

"TO DR. SAMUEL JOHNSON.

"Edinburgh, 18th June, 1778.

"MY DEAR SIR,

* * * * * * *

"Since my return to Scotland, I have been again at Lanark, and have had more conversation with Thomson's sister. It is strange that Murdoch, who was his intimate friend, should have mistaken his mother's maiden name, which he says was Hume, whereas Hume was the name of his grandmother by the mother's side. His mother's name was Beatrix Trotter[1], a daughter of Mr. Trotter of Fogo, a small proprietor of land. Thomson had one brother, whom he had with him in England as his amanuensis; but he was seized with a consumption, and having returned to Scotland, to try what his native air would do for him, died young. He had three sisters; one married to Mr. Bell, minister of the parish of Strathaven, one to Mr. Craig, father of the ingenious architect, who gave the plan of the New Town of Edinburgh, and one to Mr. Thomson, master of the grammar-school at Lanark. He was of a humane and benevolent disposition; not only sent valuable presents to his sisters, but a yearly allowance in money, and was always wishing to have it in his power to do them more good. Lord Lyttelton's observation, that 'he loathed much to write,' was very true. His letters to his sister, Mrs. Thomson, were not frequent, and in one of them he says, 'All my friends who know me, know how backward I am to write letters; and never impute the negligence of my hand to the coldness of my heart.' I send you a copy of the last letter which she had from him; she never heard that he had any intention of going into holy orders. From this late interview with his sister, I think much more favourably of him, as I hope you will. I am eager to see more of your Prefaces to the Poets: I solace myself with the few proof-sheets which I have.

"I send another parcel of Lord Hailes's 'Annals,' which you will please to return to me as soon as you conveniently can. He says, 'he wishes you would cut a little deeper;' but he may be proud that there is so little occasion to use the critical knife. I ever am, my dear sir, your faithful and affectionate humble servant, "JAMES BOSWELL."

[1] Dr. Johnson was by no means attentive to minute accuracy in his "Lives of the Poets;" for, notwithstanding my having detected this mistake, he continued it.—BOSWELL.

"TO JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

"London, 3rd July, 1778.

"SIR,—I have received two letters from you, of which the second complains of the neglect shown to the first. You must not tie your friends to such punctual correspondence. You have all possible assurances of my affection and esteem; and there ought to be no need of reiterated professions. When it may happen that I can give you either counsel or comfort, I hope it will never happen to me that I should neglect you; but you must not think me criminal or cold, if I say nothing when I have nothing to say.

"You are now happy enough. Mrs. Boswell is recovered; and I congratulate you upon the probability of her long life. If general approbation will add any thing to your enjoyment, I can tell you that I have heard you mentioned as *a man whom every body likes*. I think life has little more to give.

"———[1] has gone to his regiment. He has laid down his coach, and talks of making more contractions of his expense: how he will succeed, I know not. It is difficult to reform a household gradually; it may be done better by a system totally new. I am afraid he has always something to hide. When we pressed him to go to ————[2], he objected the necessity of attending his navigation[3]; yet he could talk of going to Aberdeen[4], a place not much nearer his navigation. I believe he cannot bear the thought of living at ———— in a state of diminution; and of appearing among the gentlemen of the neighbourhood *shorn of his beams*. This is natural, but it is cowardly. What I told him of the increasing expense of a growing family, seems to have struck him. He certainly had gone on with very confused views, and we have, I think, shown him that he is wrong; though, with the common deficience of advisers, we have not shown him how to do right.

"I wish you would a little correct or restrain your imagination, and imagine that happiness, such as life admits, may be had at other places as well as London. Without affecting[5] Stoicism, it may be said, that it is our business to exempt ourselves as much as we can from the power of external things. There is but one solid basis of happiness; and that is, the reasonable hope of a happy futurity. This may be had everywhere.

[1] [Langton.—ED.] [2] [Langton.—ED.]

[3] [The Wey canal, from Guildford to Weybridge, in which he had a considerable share, which his grandson now possesses.—ED.]

[4] [His lady and family, it appears, were in Scotland at this period.—ED.]

[5] [In former editions "*asserting*"—emended by Mr. Malone.—ED.]

"I do not blame your preference to London to other places, for it is really to be preferred, if the choice is free; but few have the choice of their place, or their manner of life; and mere pleasure ought not to be the prime motive of action.

"Mrs. Thrale, poor thing, has a daughter. Mr. Thrale dislikes the times, like the rest of us. Mrs. Williams is sick; Mrs. Desmoulins is poor. I have miserable nights. Nobody is well but Mr. Levett. I am, dear sir, your most, &c.

"SAM. JOHNSON."

Langton Mr. Langton has been pleased, at my request, to favour me with some particulars of Dr. Johnson's visit to Warley-camp, where this gentleman was at the time stationed as a captain in the Lincolnshire militia. I shall give them in his own words in a letter to me.

"It was in the summer of the year 1778, that he complied with my invitation to come down to the camp at Warley, and he staid with me about a week; the scene appeared, notwithstanding a great degree of ill health that he seemed to labour under, to interest and amuse him, as agreeing with the disposition that I believe you know he constantly manifested towards inquiring into subjects of the military kind. He sate, with a patient degree of attention, to observe the proceedings of a regimental court-martial, that happened to be called in the time of his stay with us; and one night, as late as at eleven o'clock, he accompanied the major of the regiment in going what are styled the *rounds*, where he might observe the forms of visiting the guards, for the seeing that they and their sentries are ready in their duty on their several posts. He took occasion to converse at times on military topics, once in particular, that I see the mention of, in your 'Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides,' which lies open before me[1], as to gunpowder;

[1] [*Ante*, vol. ii. p. 355.—BOSWELL.]

which he spoke of to the same effect, in part, that you relate. Langton

"On one occasion, when the regiment were going through their exercise, he went quite close to the men at one of the extremities of it, and watched all their practices attentively; and, when he came away, his remark was, 'The men indeed do load their musquets and fire with wonderful celerity.' He was likewise particular in requiring to know what was the weight of the musket balls in use, and within what distance they might be expected to take effect when fired off.

"In walking among the tents, and observing the difference between those of the officers and private men, he said, that the superiority of accommodation of the better conditions of life, to that of the inferior ones, was never exhibited to him in so distinct a view. The civilities paid to him in the camp were, from the gentlemen of the Lincolnshire regiment, one of the officers of which accommodated him with a tent in which he slept; and from General Hall, who very courteously invited him to dine with him, where he appeared to be very well pleased with his entertainment, and the civilities he received on the part of the General[1]; the attention likewise of the General's aid-de-camp, Captain Smith, seemed to be very welcome to him, as appeared by their engaging in a great deal of discourse together. The gentlemen of the East-York regiment likewise, on being informed of his coming, solicited his company at dinner, but by that time he had fixed his departure, so that he could not comply with the invitation."

In the course of this year there was a difference[2]

[1] When I one day at court expressed to General Hall my sense of the honour he had done my friend, he politely answered, "Sir, I did *myself* honour."—Boswell.

[2] [The editor suspects this difference was connected with the story mentioned *ante*, p. 47 and 63.—Ed.]

between him and his friend Mr. Strahan; the particulars of which it is unnecessary to relate. Their reconciliation was communicated to me in a letter from Mr. Strahan in the following words:

"The notes I showed you that past between him and me were dated in March last. The matter lay dormant till 27th July, when he wrote to me as follows:

'TO WILLIAM STRAHAN, ESQ.

'SIR,—It would be very foolish for us to continue strangers any longer. You can never by persistency make wrong right. If I resented too acrimoniously, I resented only to yourself. Nobody ever saw or heard what I wrote. You saw that my anger was over, for in a day or two I came to your house. I have given you a longer time; and I hope you have made so good use of it, as to be no longer on evil terms with, sir, your, &c. 'SAM. JOHNSON.'

"On this I called upon him: and he has since dined with me."

After this time the same friendship as formerly continued between Dr. Johnson and Mr. Strahan. My friend mentioned to me a little circumstance of his attention, which, though we may smile at it, must be allowed to have its foundation in a nice and true knowledge of human life. "When I write to Scotland (said he), I employ Strahan to frank my letters, that he may have the consequence of appearing a parliament-man among his countrymen."

["TO MRS. THRALE.

"15th October, 1778.

Letters, vol. ii. p. 20.

"As to Dr. Collier's[1] epitaph, Nollekens has had it so long, that I have forgotten how long. You never had it.

"There is a print of Mrs. Montague, and I shall think myself very ill rewarded for my love and admiration if she does not give me one; she will give it nobody in whom it will excite more respectful sentiments. But I never could get any thing from her but by pushing a face; and so, if you please, you may tell her.

[1] [Dr. Collier, of the Commons, an early friend of Mrs. Thrale's, who died 23d May, 1777.—ED.]

* * * * * *

"When I called the other day at Burney's, I found only the young ones at home; at last came the doctor and madam, from a dinner in the country, to tell how they had been robbed as they returned. The doctor saved his purse, but gave them three guineas and some silver, of which they returned him three-and-sixpence, unasked, to pay the turnpike.

"I have sat twice to Sir Joshua, and he seems to like his own performance. He has projected another, in which I am to be busy; but we can think on it at leisure.

"Mrs. Williams is come home better, and the habitation is all concord and harmony; only Mr. Levett harbours discontent.

"With Dr. Lawrence's consent, I have, for the two last nights, taken musk: the first night was a worse night than common, the second, a better; but not so much better as that I dare ascribe any virtue to the medicine. I took a scruple each time.

"TO MRS. THRALE.

"31st October, 1778. Letters, vol. ii. p. 27.

"Sir Joshua has finished my picture, and it seems to please every body, but I shall wait to see how it pleases you.

* * * * * * *

"To-day Mrs. Williams and Mrs. Desmoulins had a scold, and Williams was going away; but I bid her *not turn tail,* and she came back, and rather got the upper hand."]

We surely cannot but admire the benevolent exertions of this great and good man, especially when we consider how grievously he was afflicted with bad health, and how uncomfortable his home was made by the perpetual jarring of those whom he charitably accommodated under his roof. He has sometimes suffered me to talk jocularly of his group of females, and call them his *Seraglio.* He thus mentions them, together with honest Levett, in one of his letters to Mrs. Thrale; "Williams hates every body; Levett hates Desmoulins, and does not love Williams; Desmoulins hates them both; Poll[1] loves none of them."

[1] Miss Carmichael.—BOSWELL. [The editor has not learned how this lady was connected with Dr. Johnson.—ED.]

Hawk. p. 408.

[These connexions exposed him to trouble and incessant solicitation, which he bore well enough; but his inmates were enemies to his peace, and occasioned him great disquiet: the jealousy that subsisted among them rendered his dwelling irksome to him, and he seldom approached it, after an evening's conversation abroad, but with the dread of finding it a scene of discord, and of having his ears filled with the complaints of Mrs. Williams of Frank's neglect of his duty and inattention to the interests of his master, and of Frank against Mrs. Williams, for the authority she assumed over him, and exercised with an unwarrantable severity. Even those intruders who had taken shelter under his roof, and who, in his absence from home, brought thither their children, found cause to murmur; "their provision of food was scanty, or their dinners ill dressed;" all which he chose to endure rather than put an end to their clamours by ridding his home of such thankless and troublesome guests. Nay, so insensible was he of the ingratitude of those whom he suffered thus to hang upon him, and among whom he may be said to have divided an income which was little more than sufficient for his own support, that he would submit to reproach and personal affront from some of them; even Levett would sometimes insult him, and Mrs. Williams, in her paroxysms of rage, has been known to drive him from her presence.]

"TO CAPTAIN LANGTON[1], WARLEY-CAMP.

"31st October, 1778.

"DEAR SIR,—When I recollect how long ago I was received with so much kindness at Warley common, I am ashamed that I have not made some inquiries after my friends.

[1] Dr. Johnson here addresses his worthy friend, Bennet Langton, Esq. by his title as captain of the Lincolnshire militia, in which he has since been most deservedly raised to the rank of major.—BOSWELL.

"Pray how many sheep-stealers did you convict? and how did you punish them? When are you to be cantoned in better habitations? The air grows cold, and the ground damp. Longer stay in the camp cannot be without much danger to the health of the common men, if even the officers can escape.

"You see that Dr. Percy is now dean of Carlisle; about five hundred a year, with a power of presenting himself to some good living. He is provided for.

"The session of the Club is to commence with that of the parliament. Mr. Banks[1] desires to be admitted; he will be a very honourable accession.

"Did the king please you[2]? The Coxheath men, I think, have some reason to complain[3]. Reynolds says your camp is better than theirs.

"I hope you find yourself able to encounter this weather. Take care of your own health; and, as you can, of your men. Be pleased to make my compliments to all the gentlemen whose notice I have had, and whose kindness I have experienced. I am, dear sir, your most humble servant, "SAM. JOHNSON."

I wrote to him on the 18th of August, the 18th of September, and the 6th of November; informing him of my having had another son born, whom I had called James[4]; that I had passed some time at Auchinleck; that the Countess of Loudoun, now in her ninety-ninth year, was as fresh as when he saw her, and remembered him with respect; and that his mother by adoption, the Countess of Eglintoune, had said to me, "Tell Mr. Johnson, I love him exceedingly;" that I had again suffered much from bad spirits; and that as it was very long since I heard from him, I was not a little uneasy.

[1] [Afterwards Sir Joseph.—ED.]

[2] [His majesty and the queen visited Warley Camp on the 20th October.—ED.]

[3] [Of the king's not visiting that camp as well as Warley, which, however, he did, on the 3d November.—ED.]

[4] [This was the gentleman who contributed a few notes to this work. He was of Brazenose College, and a Vinerian Fellow, and died in February, 1822, at his chambers, in the Temple.—HALL. The editor had the pleasure of his acquaintance. He published an edition of Shakspeare; was very convivial; and in other respects like his father, though altogether on a smaller scale.—ED.]

The continuance of his regard for his friend, Dr. Burney, appears from the following letters:

"TO THE REVEREND DR. WHEELER[1], OXFORD.

"London, 2d November, 1778.

"DEAR SIR,—Dr. Burney, who brings this paper, is engaged in a History of Musick; and having been told by Dr. Markham of some MSS. relating to his subject, which are in the library of your college, is desirous to examine them. He is my friend; and therefore I take the liberty of entreating your favour and assistance in his inquiry; and can assure you, with great confidence, that if you knew him he would not want any intervenient solicitation to obtain the kindness of one who loves learning and virtue as you love them.

"I have been flattering myself all the summer with the hope of paying my annual visit to my friends; but something has obstructed me: I still hope not to be long without seeing you. I should be glad of a little literary talk; and glad to show you, by the frequency of my visits, how eagerly I love it, when you talk it. I am, dear sir, your most humble servant,

"SAM. JOHNSON."

"TO THE REVEREND DR. EDWARDS[2], OXFORD.

"London, 2d November, 1778.

"SIR,—The bearer, Dr. Burney, has had some account of a Welsh manuscript in the Bodleian library, from which he hopes to gain some materials for his History of Musick; but being ignorant of the language, is at a loss where to find assistance. I make no doubt but you, sir, can help him through his difficulties, and therefore take the liberty of recommending him to your favour, as I am sure you will find him a man worthy of every civility that can be shown, and every benefit that can be conferred.

"But we must not let Welsh drive us from Greek. What comes of Xenophon[3]? If you do not like the trouble of publish-

[1] [Benjamin Wheeler was entered at Trinity College, November 12, 1751, at the age of eighteen. Having taken the degree of M. A. from that house in 1758, he removed to Magdalen College, where he became B. D. 1769, and D. D. the year following. In 1776 he was appointed Regius Professor of Divinity and Canon of Christ Church, in which he was succeeded by Dr. Randolph, late Bishop of London, in 1783.—HALL.

[2] [Edward Edwards entered at Jesus College, 1743, æt. 17; M. A. 1749; B. D. 1756; and D. D. 1760.—HALL.]

[3] [Dr. Edwards was preparing an edition of Xenophon's Memorabilia, which, however, he did not live to publish.—ED.]

ing the book, do not let your commentaries be lost; contrive that they may be published somewhere. I am, sir, your humble servant, "SAM. JOHNSON."

These letters procured Dr. Burney great kindness and friendly offices from both of these gentlemen, not only on that occasion, but in future visits to the university. The same year Dr. Johnson not only wrote to Joseph Warton in favour of Dr. Burney's youngest son, who was to be placed in the college of Winchester, but accompanied him when he went thither.

"TO JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

"21st November, 1778.

"DEAR SIR,—It is indeed a long time since I wrote, and I think you have some reason to complain; however, you must not let small things disturb you, when you have such a fine addition to your happiness as a new boy, and I hope your lady's health restored by bringing him. It seems very probable that a little care will now restore her, if any remains of her complaints are left.

"You seem, if I understand your letter, to be gaining ground at Auchinleck, an incident that would give me great delight.

* * * * * *

"When any fit of anxiety, or gloominess, or perversion of mind lays hold upon you, make it a rule not to publish it by complaints, but exert your whole care to hide it; by endeavouring to hide it, you will drive it away. Be always busy.

"The Club is to meet with the parliament; we talk of electing Banks, the traveller; he will be a reputable member.

"Langton has been encamped with his company of militia on Warley-common; I spent five days amongst them; he signalised himself as a diligent officer, and has very high respect in the regiment. He presided when I was there at a court-martial; he is now quartered in Hertfordshire; his lady and little ones are in Scotland. Paoli came to the camp, and commended the soldiers.

"Of myself I have no great matters to say: my health is not restored; my nights are restless and tedious. The best night that I have had these twenty years was at Fort-Augustus.

"I hope soon to send you a few lives to read. I am, dear sir, your most affectionate, "SAM. JOHNSON."

About this time the Reverend Mr. John Hussey, who had been some time in trade, and was then a clergyman of the church of England, being about to undertake a journey to Aleppo, and other parts of the east, which he accomplished, Dr. Johnson (who had long been in habits of intimacy with him) honoured him with the following letter:

"TO MR. JOHN HUSSEY.

"29th December, 1778.

"DEAR SIR,—I have sent you the 'Grammar,' and have left you two books more, by which I hope to be remembered: write my name in them; we may, perhaps, see each other no more; you part with my good wishes, nor do I despair of seeing you return. Let no opportunities of vice corrupt you; let no bad example seduce you; let the blindness of Mahometans confirm you in Christianity. God bless you. I am, dear sir, your affectionate humble servant, "SAM. JOHNSON."

Johnson this year expressed great satisfaction at the publication of the first volume of "Discourses to the Royal Academy," by Sir Joshua Reynolds, whom he always considered as one of his literary school. Much praise indeed is due to those excellent Discourses, which are so universally admired, and for which the authour received from the Empress of Russia a gold snuff-box, adorned with her profile in *bas relief*, set in diamonds; and containing, what is infinitely more valuable, a slip of paper, on which are written with her imperial majesty's own hand, the following words: "*Pour le Chevalier Reynolds, en temoignage du contentement que j'ai ressentie à la lecture de ses excellens discours sur la peinture.*"

This year, Johnson gave the world a luminous proof that the vigour of his mind in all its faculties,

whether memory, judgment, or imagination, was not in the least abated; for this year came out the first four volumes of his "Prefaces, biographical and critical, to the most eminent of the English Poets*," published by the booksellers of London. The remaining volumes came out in the year 1780. The poets were selected by the several booksellers who had the honorary copyright, which is still preserved among them by mutual compact, notwithstanding the decision of the house of lords against the perpetuity of literary property. We have his own authority [1], that by his recommendation the poems of Blackmore, Watts, Pomfret, and Yalden, were added to the collection. Of this work I shall speak more particularly hereafter.

[DR. JOHNSON TO MRS. ASTON. Pemb. MS.

"London, Bolt-court, Fleet-street, 2d Jan. 1779.

"DEAR MADAM,—Now the new year is come, of which I wish you and dear Mrs. Gastrel many and many returns, it is fit that I give you some account of the year past. In the beginning of it I had a difficulty of breathing, and other illness, from which, however, I by degrees recovered, and from which I am now tolerably free. In the spring and summer I flattered myself that I should come to Lichfield, and forbore to write till I could tell of my intentions with some certainty, and one thing or other making the journey always improper, as I did not come, I omitted to write, till at last I grew afraid of hearing ill news. But the other day Mr. Prujean [2] called and left word, that you, dear madam, are grown better; and I know not when I heard any thing that pleased me so much. I shall now long more and more to see Lichfield, and partake the happiness of your recovery.

"Now you begin to mend, you have great encouragement to take care of yourself. Do not omit any thing that can conduce to your health, and when I come, I shall hope to enjoy with you, and dearest Mrs. Gastrel, many pleasing hours.

"Do not be angry at my long omission to write, but let me hear how you both do, for you will write to nobody, to whom

[1] Life of Watts.—BOSWELL.

[2] [Mr. Prujean married the youngest of the Misses Aston.—HARWOOD.]

your welfare will give more pleasure, than to, dearest madam, your most humble servant, "SAM. JOHNSON."]

Pearson MSS.

["DR. JOHNSON TO MRS. LUCY PORTER.

"Bolt-court, Fleet-street, 2d Jan. 1779.

"DEAREST LOVE,—Though I have so long omitted to write, I will omit it no longer. I hope the new year finds you not worse than you have formerly been; and I wish that many years may pass over you without bringing either pain or discontent. For my part, I think my health, though not good, yet rather better than when I left you.

"My purpose was to have paid you my annual visit in the summer, but it happened otherwise, not by any journey another way, for I have never been many miles from London, but by such hindrances as it is hard to bring to any account.

"Do not follow my bad example, but write to me soon again, and let me know of you what you have to tell; I hope it is all good.

"Please to make my compliments to Mrs. Cobb, Mrs. Adey, and Miss Adey, and all the ladies and gentlemen that frequent your mansion.

"If you want any books, or any thing else that I can send you, let me know. I am, dear madam, your most humble servant, "SAM. JOHNSON."]

On the 22d of January, I wrote to him on several topicks, and mentioned that as he had been so good as to permit me to have the proof sheets of his "Lives of the Poets," I had written to his servant, Francis, to take care of them for me.

"MR. BOSWELL TO DR. JOHNSON.

"Edinburgh, 2d February, 1779.

"MY DEAR SIR,—Garrick's death is a striking event; not that we should be surprised with the death of any man, who has lived sixty-two years[1]; but because there was a *vivacity* in

[1] On Mr. Garrick's monument in Lichfield Cathedral, he is said to have died, "aged 64 years." But it is a mistake, and Mr. Boswell is perfectly correct. Garrick was baptised at Hereford, Feb. 28, 1716-17, and died at his house in London, Jan. 20, 1779. The inaccuracy of lapidary inscriptions is well known. —MALONE. [The inscription, as given in Harwood's *History of Lichfield*, has *sixty-three* years.—ED.]

our late celebrated friend, which drove away the thoughts of *death* from any association with *him*. I am sure you will be tenderly affected with his departure; and I would wish to hear from you upon the subject. I was obliged to him in my days of effervescence in London, when poor Derrick was my governour; and since that time I received many civilities from him. Do you remember how pleasing it was, when I received a letter from him at Inverary, upon our first return to civilized living after our Hebridean journey? I shall always remember him with affection as well as admiration.

"On Saturday last, being the 30th of January, I drank coffee and old port, and had solemn conversation with the Reverend Mr. Falconer, a nonjuring bishop, a very learned and worthy man. He gave two toasts, which you will believe I drank with cordiality, Dr. Samuel Johnson and Flora Macdonald. I sat about four hours with him, and it was really as if I had been living in the last century. The episcopal church of Scotland, though faithful to the royal house of Stuart, has never accepted of any *congé d'élire* since the revolution; it is the only true episcopal church in Scotland, as it has its own succession of bishops. For as to the episcopal clergy, who take the oaths to the present government, they indeed follow the rites of the church of England, but, as Bishop Falconer observed, 'they are not *episcopals*; for they are under no bishop, as a bishop cannot have authority beyond his diocese.' This venerable gentleman did me the honour to dine with me yesterday, and he laid his hands upon the heads of my little ones. We had a good deal of curious literary conversation, particularly about Mr. Thomas Ruddiman, with whom he lived in great friendship.

"Any fresh instance of the uncertainty of life makes one embrace more closely a valuable friend. My dear and much respected sir, may God preserve you long in this world while I am in it. I am ever, your much obliged, and affectionate humble servant, "JAMES BOSWELL."

[When Garrick was on his last sick-bed, no arguments or recitals of such facts as reached him would persuade Dr. Johnson of his danger: he had prepossessed himself with a notion, that to say a man was sick, was very near wishing him so; and few things offended him more, than prognosticating even the death of an ordinary acquaintance. "Ay, ay," said Piozzi, p. 145.

Piozzi, p. 146. he, "Swift knew the world pretty well, when he said, that,

Some dire misfortune to portend,
No enemy can match a friend."

The danger then of Mr. Garrick, or of Mr. Thrale, whom he loved better, was an image which no one durst present before his view; he always persisted in the possibility and hope of their recovering disorders from which no human creatures by human means alone ever did recover. His distress for their loss was for that very reason poignant to excess: but his fears of his own salvation were excessive: his truly tolerant spirit, and Christian charity, which *hopeth all things*, and *believeth all things*, made him rely securely on the safety of his friends, while his earnest aspiration after a blessed immortality made him cautious of his own steps, and timorous concerning their consequences. He knew how much had been given, and filled his mind with fancies of how much would be required, till his impressed imagination was often disturbed by them, and his health suffered from the sensibility of his too tender conscience: a real Christian is *so* apt to find his task above his power of performance!]

Reyn. MS. ["DR. JOHNSON TO MISS REYNOLDS.

"15th February, 1779.

"DEAREST MADAM,—I have never deserved to be treated as you treat me. When you employed mē before, I undertook your affair[1] and succeeded, but then I succeeded by choosing a proper time, and a proper time I will try to choose again.

"I have about a week's work to do, and then I shall come to live in town, and will first wait on you in Dover-street. You are not to think that I neglect you, for your nieces will tell you how rarely they have seen mē. I will wait on you as soon as I can, and yet you must resolve to talk things over without

[1] [This seems to allude to some favour (probably a pecuniary one) which Johnson was to solicit from Sir Joshua for Miss Reynolds.—ED.]

anger, and you must leave me to catch opportunities, and be assured, dearest dear, that I should have very little enjoyment of that day in which I had neglected any opportunity of doing good to you. I am, dearest madam, your most humble servant,

"SAM. JOHNSON."]

["TO MRS. LUCY PORTER. Pearson MS.

"Bolt-court, Fleet-street, 4th March, 1779.

"MY DEAR LOVE,—Since I heard from you, I sent you a little print, and two barrels of oysters, and I shall have some little books to send you soon.

"I have seen Mr. Pearson, and am pleased to find that he has got a living. I was hurried when he was with me, but had time to hear that my friends were all well.

"Poor Mrs. Adey was, I think, a good woman, and therefore her death is less to be lamented; but it is not pleasant to think how uncertain it is, that, when friends part, they will ever meet again.

"My old complaint of flatulence, and tight and short breath, oppress me heavily. My nights are very restless. I think of consulting the doctor to-morrow.

"This has been a mild winter, for which I hope you have been the better. Take what care you can of yourself, and do not forget to drink. I was somehow or other hindered from coming into the country last summer, but I think of coming this year. I am, dear love, your most humble servant,

"SAM. JOHNSON."]

["TO MRS. ASTON. Pemb. MSS.

"Bolt-court, Fleet-street, 4th March, 1779.

"DEAR MADAM,—Mrs. Gastrell and you are very often in my thoughts, though I do not write so often as might be expected from so much love and so much respect. I please myself with thinking that I shall see you again, and shall find you better. But futurity is uncertain: poor David[1] had doubtless many futurities in his head, which death has intercepted—a death, I believe, totally unexpected: he did not in his last hour seem to think his life in danger.

"My old complaints hang heavy on me, and my nights are very uncomfortable and unquiet; and sleepless nights make heavy days. I think to go to my physician, and try what can be done. For why should not I grow better as well as you?

"Now you are better, pray, dearest madam, take care of

[1] [Mr. Garrick.—ED.]

yourself. I hope to come this summer and watch you. It will be a very pleasant journey if I can find you and dear Mrs. Gastrell well.

"I sent you two barrels of oysters; if you would wish for more, please to send your commands to, madam, your most humble servant, "SAM. JOHNSON."]

Letters, vol. ii. p. 42.

["TO MRS. THRALE.

"10th March, 1779.

"I will come to see you on Saturday, only let me know whether I must come to the Borough, or am to be taken up here.

* * * * * *

"I got my Lives, not yet quite printed, put neatly together, and sent them to the king: what he says of them I know not. If the king is a whig, he will not like them: but is any king a whig?"]

On the 23d of February I had written to him again, complaining of his silence, as I had heard he was ill, and had written to Mr. Thrale for information concerning him: and I announced my intention of soon being again in London.

"TO JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

"13th March, 1779.

"DEAR SIR,—Why should you take such delight to make a bustle, to write to Mr. Thrale that I am negligent, and to Francis to do what is so very unnecessary? Thrale, you may be sure, cared not about it; and I shall spare Francis the trouble, by ordering a set both of the Lives and Poets to dear Mrs. Boswell[1], in acknowledgment of her marmalade. Persuade her to accept them, and accept them kindly. If I thought she would receive them scornfully, I would send them to Miss Boswell, who, I hope, has yet none of her mamma's ill-will to me.

"I would send sets of Lives, four volumes, to some other friends, to Lord Hailes first. His second volume lies by my bed-side; a book surely of great labour, and to every just thinker of great delight. Write me word to whom I shall send besides. Would it please Lord Auchinleck? Mrs. Thrale waits in the coach. I am, dear sir, &c. "SAM. JOHNSON."

[1] He sent a set elegantly bound and gilt, which was received as a very handsome present.—BOSWELL.

This letter crossed me on the road to London, where I arrived on Monday, March 15, and next morning, at a late hour, found Dr. Johnson sitting over his tea, attended by Mrs. Desmoulins, Mr. Levett, and a clergyman, who had come to submit some poetical pieces to his revision. It is wonderful what a number and variety of writers, some of them even unknown to him, prevailed on his good-nature to look over their works, and suggest corrections and improvements. My arrival interrupted, for a little while, the important business of this true representative of Bayes; upon its being resumed, I found that the subject under immediate consideration was a translation, yet in manuscript, of the "Carmen Seculare" of Horace, which had this year been set to musick, and performed as a publick entertainment in London, for the joint benefit of Monsieur Philidor and Signor Baretti. When Johnson had done reading, the authour asked him bluntly, "If upon the whole it was a good translation?" Johnson, whose regard for truth was uncommonly strict, seemed to be puzzled for a moment what answer to make, as he certainly could not honestly commend the performance: with exquisite address he evaded the question thus, "Sir, I do not say that it may not be made a very good translation." Here nothing whatever in favour of the performance was affirmed, and yet the writer was not shocked. A printed "Ode to the Warlike Genius of Britain" came next in review. The bard[1] was a lank bony figure, with short black hair; he was writhing himself in agitation,

[1] [This was a Mr. Tasker. Mr. D'Israeli informs the Editor, that this portrait is so accurately drawn, that, being, some years after the publication of this work, at a watering-place on the coast of Devon, he was visited by Mr. Tasker, whose name, however, he did not then know, but was so struck with his resemblance to Boswell's picture, that he asked him whether he had not had an interview with Dr. Johnson, and it appeared that he was indeed the author of "The Warlike Genius of Britain."—Ed.]

while Johnson read, and, showing his teeth in a grin of earnestness, exclaimed in broken sentences, and in a keen sharp tone, "Is that poetry, sir?—Is it Pindar?" JOHNSON. "Why, sir, there is here a great deal of what is called poetry." Then, turning to me, the poet cried, "My muse has not been long upon the town, and (pointing to the Ode) it trembles under the hand of the great critick." Johnson, in a tone of displeasure, asked him, "Why do you praise Anson?" I did not trouble him by asking his reason for this question[1]. He proceeded:—"Here is an errour, sir; you have made Genius feminine." "Palpable, sir (cried the enthusiast); I know it. But (in a lower tone) it was to pay a compliment to the Duchess of Devonshire, with which her grace was pleased. She is walking across Coxheath[2] in the military uniform, and I suppose her to be the Genius of Britain." JOHNSON. "Sir, you are giving a reason for it; but that will not make it right. You may have a reason why two and two should make five; but they will still make but four."

Although I was several times with him in the course of the following days, such it seems were my occupations, or such my negligence, that I have preserved no memorial of his conversation till Friday, March 26, when I visited him. He said he expected to be attacked on account of his "Lives of the Poets." "However," said he, "I would rather be attacked than unnoticed. For the worst thing you can do to an authour is to be silent as to his works. An assault upon a town is a bad thing; but starving it is still

[1] [He disliked Lord Anson probably from local politics. On one occasion he visited Lord Anson's seat, and although, as he confessed, "well received and kindly treated, he, with the true gratitude of a wit, ridiculed the master of the house before he had left it half an hour." In the grounds there is a temple of the winds, on which he made the following epigram:

Gratum animum laudo; Qui debuit omnia ventis,
Quam bene ventorum, surgere templa jubet!—*Piozzi Anec.* p. 55.—ED.]

[2] [Where there was a camp at this period; see *ante*, p. 233.—ED.]

worse; an assault may be unsuccessful, you may have more men killed than you kill; but if you starve the town, you are sure of victory."

[Dr. Johnson was famous for disregarding public abuse. When the people criticised and answered his pamphlets, papers, &c. he would say: "Why now, these fellows are only advertising my book: it is surely better a man should be abused than forgotten."] Piozzi, p. 140.

Talking of a friend[1] of ours associating with persons of very discordant principles and characters; I said he was a very universal man, quite a man of the world. JOHNSON. "Yes, sir; but one may be so much a man of the world, as to be nothing in the world. I remember a passage in Goldsmith's 'Vicar of Wakefield,' which he was afterwards fool enough to expunge. 'I do not love a man who is zealous for nothing.'" BOSWELL. "That was a fine passage." JOHNSON. "Yes, sir: there was another fine passage too, which he struck out: 'When I was a young man, being anxious to distinguish myself, I was perpetually starting new propositions. But I soon gave this over; for I found that generally what was new was false[2].'" I said I did not like to sit with people of whom I had not a good opinion. JOHNSON. "But you must not indulge your delicacy too much, or you will be a *tête-à-tête* man all your life."

["DR. JOHNSON TO MRS. THRALE. Letters, vol. ii. p. 43.

"18th March, 1779.

"On Monday I came late to Mrs. Vesey. Mrs. Montagu was there; I called for the print[3], and got good words. The evening was not brilliant, but I had thanks for my company.

[1] [Probably Sir Joshua Reynolds; see *ante*, p. 117.—ED.]

[2] Dr. Burney, in a note introduced in a former page, has mentioned this circumstance, concerning Goldsmith, as communicated to him by Dr. Johnson, not recollecting that it occurred here. His remark, however, is not wholly superfluous, as it ascertains that the words which Goldsmith had put into the mouth of a fictitious character in the "Vicar of Wakefield," and which, as we learn from Dr. Johnson, he afterwards expunged, related, like many other passages in his novel, to himself.—MALONE.

[3] [Mrs. Montagu's portrait.—ED.]

Letters, vol. ii. p. 43. The night was troublesome. On Tuesday I fasted, and went to the doctor: he ordered bleeding. On Wednesday I had the tea-pot, fasted, and was blooded. Wednesday night was better. To-day I have dined at Mr. Strahan's, at Islington, with his new wife. To-night there will be opium; to-morrow the tea-pot; then heigh for Saturday. I wish the doctor would bleed me again. Yet every body that I meet says that I look better than when I was last met."]

During my stay in London this spring, I find I was unaccountably negligent in preserving Johnson's sayings, more so than at any time when I was happy enough to have an opportunity of hearing his wisdom and wit. There is no help for it now. I must content myself with presenting such scraps as I have. But I am nevertheless ashamed and vexed to think how much has been lost. It is not that there was a bad crop this year, but that I was not sufficiently careful in gathering it in. I therefore, in some instances, can only exhibit a few detached fragments.

Talking of the wonderful concealment of the authour of the celebrated letters signed *Junius*, he said, "I should have believed Burke to be Junius, because I know no man but Burke who is capable of writing these letters; but Burke spontaneously denied it to me. The case would have been different, had I asked him if he was the authour; a man so questioned, as to an anonymous publication, may think he has a right to deny it."

He observed that his old friend, Mr. Sheridan, had been honoured with extraordinary attention in his own country, by having had an exception made in his favour in an Irish act of parliament concerning insolvent debtors [1]. "Thus to be singled out," said he,

[1] [This is a total mistake. Mr. White tells us of the personal civility with which some members of a committee of the Irish house of commons on a bill for the relief of insolvent debtors treated Mr. Sheridan and Mr. White who appeared on his behalf, but there is no exception in the act. Sheridan's name is one of some hundreds, and has no distinction whatsoever. The favour he sought was, to be included in the act without being in actual custody, as he was

"by a legislature, as an object of public consideration and kindness, is a proof of no common merit."

At Streatham, on Monday, March 29, at breakfast, he maintained that a father had no right to control the inclinations of his daughter in marriage. [Of parental authority, indeed, few people thought with a lower degree of estimation. Mrs. Thrale one day mentioned the resignation of Cyrus to his father's will, as related by Xenophon, when, after all his conquests, he requested the consent of Cambyses to his marriage with a neighbouring princess; and she added Rollin's applause and recommendation of the example. "Do you not perceive, then," says Johnson, "that Xenophon on this occasion commends like a pedant, and Pere Rollin applauds like a slave? If Cyrus, by his conquests, had not purchased emancipation, he had conquered to little purpose indeed. Can you forbear to see the folly of a fellow who has in his care the lives of thousands, when he begs his papa's permission to be married, and confesses his inability to decide in a matter which concerns no man's happiness but his own?" Dr. Johnson caught Mrs. Thrale another time reprimanding the daughter of her housekeeper for having sat down unpermitted in her mother's presence. "Why, she gets her living, does she not," said he, "without her mother's help? Let the wench alone," continued he. And when they were again out of the women's sight who were concerned in the dispute, "Poor people's children, dear lady," said he, "never respect them. I did not respect my own mother, though I loved her: and one day, when in anger, she called me a puppy, I asked her if she knew what they called a puppy's mother."] Piozzi, p. 20.

On Wednesday, 31st March, when I visited him,

resident in France; this he obtained, but not specially, for one hundred and twenty other persons, in similar circumstances, are also included. See *Schedule to Irish Statute*, 5th Geo. 3rd, chap. 23.—Ed.]

and confessed an excess of which I had very seldom been guilty—that I had spent a whole night in playing at cards, and that I could not look back on it with satisfaction—instead of a harsh animadversion, he mildly said, "Alas, sir, on how few things can we look back with satisfaction!"

On Thursday, 1st April, he commended one of the Dukes of Devonshire for "a dogged veracity [1]." He said, too, "London is nothing to some people; but to a man whose pleasure is intellectual, London is the place. And there is no place where economy can be so well practised as in London: more can be had here for the money, even by ladies, than any where else. You cannot play tricks with your fortune in a small place; you must make an uniform appearance. Here a lady may have well-furnished apartments, and elegant dress, without any meat in her kitchen."

I was amused by considering with how much ease and coolness he could write or talk to a friend, exhorting him not to suppose that happiness was not to be found as well in other places as in London; when he himself was at all times sensible of its being, comparatively speaking, a heaven upon earth. The truth is, that by those who from sagacity, attention, and experience, have learnt the full advantage of London, its pre-eminence over every other place, not only for variety of enjoyment, but for comfort, will be felt with a philosophical exultation. The freedom from remark and petty censure, with which life may be passed there, is a circumstance which a man who knows the teasing restraint of a narrow circle must relish highly. Mr. Burke, whose orderly and amiable domestick habits might make the eye of observation less irksome to him than to most men, said once very pleasantly, in my hearing, "Though I have

[1] See *ante*, p. 38.—BOSWELL.

the honour to represent Bristol, I should not like to live there; I should be obliged to be so much *upon my good behaviour*." In London, a man may live in splendid society at one time, and in frugal retirement at another, without animadversion. There, and there alone, a man's own house is truly his *castle*, in which he can be in perfect safety from intrusion whenever he pleases. I never shall forget how well this was expressed to me one day by Mr. Meynell: "The chief advantage of London," said he, "is, that a man is always *so near his burrow*."

He said of one of his old acquaintances [1], "He is very fit for a travelling governour. He knows French very well. He is a man of good principles; and there would be no danger that a young gentleman should catch his manner; for it is so very bad, that it must be avoided. In that respect he would be like the drunken Helot."

A gentleman has informed me, that Johnson said of the same person, "Sir, he has the most *inverted* understanding of any man whom I have ever known."

On Friday, 2d April, being Good-Friday, I visited him in the morning as usual; and finding that we insensibly fell into a train of ridicule upon the foibles of one of our friends, a very worthy man, I, by way of a check, quoted some good admonition from "The Government of the Tongue," that very pious book. It happened also remarkably enough, that the subject of the sermon preached to us to-day by Dr. Burrows, the rector of St. Clement Danes, was the certainty that at the last day we must give an account of "the deeds done in the body;" and amongst various acts of culpability he mentioned evil-speaking. As we were moving slowly along in the crowd from church, Johnson jogged my elbow and said, "Did you attend

[1] [Probably Mr. Elphinstone, the schoolmaster of Kensington, and translator of Martial. See *ante*, v. i. p. 186. *n.* and v. ii. p. 166.—Ed.]

to the sermon?" "Yes, sir," said I; "it was very applicable to *us*." He, however, stood upon the defensive. "Why, sir, the sense of ridicule is given us, and may be lawfully used. The authour of 'The Government of the Tongue' would have us treat all men alike."

In the interval between morning and evening service, he endeavoured to employ himself earnestly in devotional exercise; and, as he has mentioned in his "Prayers and Meditations," gave me "*Les Pensées de Paschal*," that I might not interrupt him. I preserve the book with reverence. His presenting it to me is marked upon it with his own hand, and I have found in it a truly divine unction. We went to church again in the afternoon.

On Saturday, 3d April, I visited him at night, and found him sitting in Mrs. Williams's room, with her, and one who he afterwards told me was a natural son [1] of the second Lord Southwell. The table had a singular appearance, being covered with a heterogeneous assemblage of oysters and porter for his company, and tea for himself. I mentioned my having heard an eminent physician, who was himself a Christian, argue in favour of universal toleration, and maintain, that no man could be hurt by another man's differing from him in opinion. JOHNSON. "Sir, you are to a certain degree hurt by knowing that even one man does not believe."

ED. [His annual review of his conduct appears to have been this year more detailed and severe than usual.]

Pr. and Med. p. 171-173 [April 2.—Good Friday.—I am now to review the last year, and find little but dismal vacuity, neither business nor pleasure; much intended, and little done. My health is much broken; my nights afford me little rest. I have tried opium, but its

[1] Mr. Mauritius Lowe, a painter, in whose favour Johnson, some years afterwards, wrote a kind letter to Sir Joshua Reynolds.—MALONE.

help is counterbalanced with great disturbance; it prevents the spasms, but it hinders sleep. O God, have mercy on me. Pr. and Med. p. 174-175

Last week I published (the first part of) the Lives of the Poets, written, I hope, in such a manner as may tend to the promotion of piety.

In this last year I have made little acquisition; I have scarcely read any thing. I maintain Mrs. ———[1] and her daughter. Other good of myself I know not where to find, except a little charity.

But I am now in my seventieth year; what can be done, ought not to be delayed.

April 3, 1779, 11 P. M.—Easter-eve.—This is the time of my annual review, and annual resolution. The review is comfortless; little done. Part of the Life of Dryden and the Life of Milton have been written; but my mind has neither been improved nor enlarged. I have read little, almost nothing. And I am not conscious that I have gained any good, or quitted any evil habits.

April 4, 1779, Easter-day.—I rose about half an hour after nine, transcribed the prayer written last night; and by neglecting to count time sat too long at breakfast, so that I came to church at the first lesson. I attended the Litany pretty well; but in the pew could not hear the communion service, and missed the prayer for the church militant. Before I went to the altar, I prayed the occasional prayer. At the altar I commended my Θ Φ[2], and again prayed the prayer; I then prayed the collects, and again my own prayer by memory. I left out a clause. I then received, I hope with earnestness; and while others received sat down; but thinking that posture, though usual, improper, I rose and stood. I prayed again, in the pew, but with what prayer I have forgotten.

When I used the occasional prayer at the altar, I added a general purpose,—To avoid idleness.

I gave two shillings to the plate.

Before I went I used, I think, my prayer, and endeavoured to calm my mind. After my return I used it again, and the collect for the day. Lord have mercy upon me.

I have for some nights called Francis to prayers, and last night discoursed with him on the sacrament.]

On Easter-day, after [the] solemn service at St. Paul's, [just described], I dined with him. Mr. Allen

[1] [No doubt Mrs. Desmoulins and her daughter.—ED.]

[2] [These letters (which Dr. Strahan seems not to have understood, p. 192) probably mean Θνητοι Φιλοι "*departed friends*."—ED.]

the printer was also his guest. He was uncommonly silent; and I have not written down any thing, except a single curious fact, which, having the sanction of his inflexible veracity, may be received as a striking instance of human insensibility and inconsideration. As he was passing by a fishmonger who was skinning an eel alive, he heard him "curse it, because it would not lie still."

On Wednesday, 7th April, I dined with him at Sir Joshua Reynolds's. I have not marked what company was there. Johnson harangued upon the qualities of different liquors; and spoke with great contempt of claret, as so weak, that "a man would be drowned by it before it made him drunk." He was persuaded to drink one glass of it, that he might judge, not from recollection, which might be dim, but from immediate sensation. He shook his head, and said, "Poor stuff! No, sir, claret is the liquor for boys; port for men; but he who aspires to be a hero (smiling) must drink brandy. In the first place, the flavour of brandy is most grateful to the palate; and then brandy will do soonest for a man what drinking *can* do for him. There are, indeed, few who are able to drink brandy. That is a power rather to be wished for than attained. And yet," proceeded he, "as in all pleasure hope is a considerable part, I know not but fruition comes too quick by brandy. Florence wine I think the worst; it is wine only to the eye; it is wine neither while you are drinking it, nor after you have drunk it; it neither pleases the taste, nor exhilarates the spirits." I reminded him how heartily he and I used to drink wine together, when we were first acquainted; and how I used to have a headache after sitting up with him. He did not like to have this recalled, or, perhaps, thinking that I boasted improperly, resolved to have a witty stroke at me; "Nay, sir, it was not the *wine* that

made your head ache, but the *sense* that I put into it." BOSWELL. "What, sir! will sense make the head ache?" JOHNSON. "Yes, sir (with a smile), when it is not used to it." No man who has a true relish of pleasantry could be offended at this; especially if Johnson in a long intimacy had given him repeated proofs of his regard and good estimation. I used to say that as he had given me a thousand pounds in praise, he had a good right now and then to take a guinea from me.

On Thursday, 8th April, I dined with him at Mr. Allan Ramsay's, with Lord Graham[1] and some other company. We talked of Shakspeare's witches. JOHNSON. "They are beings of his own creation; they are a compound of malignity and meanness, without any abilities; and are quite different from the Italian magician. King James says in his 'Dæmonology,' 'Magicians command the devils: witches are their servants.' The Italian magicians are elegant beings." RAMSAY. "Opera witches, not Drury-lane witches." Johnson observed, that abilities might be employed in a narrow sphere, as in getting money, which he said he believed no man could do without vigorous parts, though concentrated to a point. RAMSAY. "Yes, like a strong horse in a mill; he pulls better."

Lord Graham, while he praised the beauty of Loch-lomond, on the banks of which is his family seat, complained of the climate, and said he could not bear it. JOHNSON. "Nay, my lord, don't talk so: you may bear it well enough. Your ancestors have borne it more years than I can tell." This was a handsome compliment to the antiquity of the house of Montrose. His lordship told me afterwards that he had only affected to complain of the climate, lest, if

[1] [The present [third] Duke of Montrose, born in 1755. He succeeded to the dukedom in 1790.—ED.]

he had spoken as favourably of his country as he really thought, Dr. Johnson might have attacked it. Johnson was very courteous to Lady Margaret Macdonald. "Madam," said he, "when I was in the Isle of Sky[1], I heard of the people running to take the stones off the road lest Lady Margaret's horse should stumble."

Lord Graham commended Dr. Drummond at Naples as a man of extraordinary talents; and added, that he had a great love of liberty. JOHNSON. "He is *young*[2], my lord (looking to his lordship with an arch smile); all *boys* love liberty, till experience convinces them they are not so fit to govern themselves as they imagined. We are all agreed as to our own liberty; we would have as much of it as we can get; but we are not agreed as to the liberty of others: for in proportion as we take, others must lose. I believe we hardly wish that the mob should have liberty to govern us. When that was the case some time ago, no man was at liberty not to have candles in his windows." RAMSAY. "The result is, that order is better than confusion." JOHNSON. "The result is, that order cannot be had but by subordination."

On Friday, 16th April, I had been present at the trial of the unfortunate Mr. Hackman, who, in a fit of frantick jealous love, had shot Miss Ray, the favourite of a nobleman[3]. Johnson, in whose company I dined to-day with some other friends, was much interested by my account of what passed, and particularly with his prayer for the mercy of Heaven. He said, in a solemn fervid tone, "I hope he *shall* find mercy[4]."

This day a violent altercation arose between John-

[1] [See *ante*, vol. ii. p. 486.—ED.]
[2] [His lordship was twenty-four.—ED.]
[3] [John, sixth Earl of Sandwich.—ED.]
[4] [See *ante*, vol. i. p. 60.—ED.]

son and Beauclerk, which having made much noise at the time, I think it proper, in order to prevent any future misrepresentation, to give a minute account of it.

In talking of Hackman, Johnson argued, as Judge Blackstone had done, that his being furnished with two pistols was a proof that he meant to shoot two persons. Mr. Beauclerk said, "No; for that every wise man who intended to shoot himself took two pistols, that he might be sure of doing it at once. Lord ————'s cook shot himself with one pistol, and lived ten days in great agony. Mr. ——[1], who loved buttered muffins, but durst not eat them because they disagreed with his stomach, resolved to shoot himself; and then he eat three buttered muffins for breakfast, before shooting himself, knowing that he should not be troubled with indigestion; *he* had two charged pistols; one was found lying charged upon the table by him, after he had shot himself with the other."— "Well," said Johnson, with an air of triumph, "you see here one pistol was sufficient." Beauclerk replied smartly, "Because it happened to kill him." And either then or a very little afterwards, being piqued at Johnson's triumphant remark, added, "This is what you don't know, and I do." There was then a cessation of the dispute; and some minutes intervened, during which, dinner and the glass went on cheerfully; when Johnson suddenly and abruptly exclaimed, "Mr. Beauclerk, how came you to talk so petulantly to me, as 'This is what you don't know, but what I know?' One thing *I* know, which *you* don't seem to know, that you are very uncivil." BEAUCLERK. "Be-

[1] ["The Honourable [John Damer], son to the Lord [Milton, afterwards Earl of Dorchester], shot himself at three o'clock this morning, at the Bedford Arms, in Covent Garden. He was heir to 30,000*l.* a year, but of a turn rather too eccentric to be confined within the limits of any fortune. Coroner's verdict, *Lunacy*."—*Gent. Mag.* 15th Aug. 1776.—ED.]

cause *you* began by being uncivil (which you always are)." The words in parentheses were, I believe, not heard by Dr. Johnson. Here again there was a cessation of arms. Johnson told me, that the reason why he waited at first some time without taking any notice of what Mr. Beauclerk said, was because he was thinking whether he should resent it. But when he considered that there were present a young lord and an eminent traveller, two men of the world, with whom he had never dined before, he was apprehensive that they might think they had a right to take such liberties with him as Beauclerk did, and therefore resolved he would not let it pass; adding, "that he would not appear a coward." A little while after this, the conversation turned on the violence of Hackman's temper. Johnson then said, "It was his business to *command* his temper, as my friend, Mr. Beauclerk, should have done some time ago." BEAUCLERK. "I should learn of *you*, sir." JOHNSON. "Sir, you have given *me* opportunities enough of learning, when I have been in *your* company. No man loves to be treated with contempt." BEAUCLERK (with a polite inclination towards Johnson). "Sir, you have known me twenty years, and however I may have treated others, you may be sure I could never treat you with contempt." JOHNSON. "Sir, you have said more than was necessary." Thus it ended; and Beauclerk's coach not having come for him till very late, Dr. Johnson and another gentleman sat with him a long time after the rest of the company were gone; and he and I dined at Beauclerk's on the Saturday se'nnight following.

After this tempest had subsided, I recollect the following particulars of his conversation:

"I am always for getting a boy forward in his learning; for that is a sure good. I would let him at first read *any* English book which happens to engage

his attention; because you have done a great deal, when you have brought him to have entertainment from a book. He 'll get better books afterwards."

["I would never," said he, on another occasion, "desire a young man to neglect his business for the purpose of pursuing his studies, because it is unreasonable; I would only desire him to read at those hours when he would otherwise be unemployed. I will not promise that he will be a Bentley; but if he be a lad of any parts, he will certainly make a sensible man."] Hawk. Apoph. p. 204.

[Dr. Johnson had never, by his own account, been a close student, and used to advise young people never to be without a book in their pocket, to be read at by-times when they had nothing else to do. "It has been by that means," said he one day to a boy at Mr. Thrale's, "that all my knowledge has been gained, except what I have picked up by running about the world with my wits ready to observe, and my tongue ready to talk. A man is seldom in a humour to unlock his book-case, set his desk in order, and betake himself to serious study; but a retentive memory will do something, and a fellow shall have strange credit given him, if he can but recollect striking passages from different books, keep the authors separate in his head, and bring his stock of knowledge artfully into play: how else," added he, "do the gamesters manage when they play for more money than they are worth?" His Dictionary, however, could not, one would think, have been written by running up and down; but he really did not consider it as a great performance; and used to say, "That he might have done it easily in two years, had not his health received several shocks during the time." Piozzi, p. 40, 41.

When Mr. Thrale, in consequence of this declaration, teased him in the year 1769 to give a new

Piozzi, p. 41. edition of it, because, said he, there are four or five gross faults: "Alas, sir!" replied Johnson, "there are four or five hundred faults, instead of four or five; but you do not consider that it would take me up three whole months' labour, and when the time was expired the work would not be done." When the booksellers set him about it, however, some years after, he went cheerfully to the business, said he was well paid, and that they deserved to have it done carefully.]

"Mallet, I believe, never wrote a single line of his projected life of the Duke of Marlborough. He groped for materials, and thought of it, till he had exhausted his mind. Thus it sometimes happens that men entangle themselves in their own schemes."

"To be contradicted in order to force you to talk is mighty unpleasing. You *shine*, indeed; but it is by being *ground*."

Of a gentleman who made some figure among the literati of his time (Mr. Fitzherbert[1]), he said, "What eminence he had was by a felicity of manner: he had no more learning than what he could not help."

On Saturday, April 24, I dined with him at Mr. Beauclerk's, with Sir Joshua Reynolds, Mr. Jones (afterwards Sir William), Mr. Langton, Mr. Steevens, Mr. Paradise and Dr. Higgins. I mentioned that Mr. Wilkes had attacked Garrick to me, as a man who had no friend. JOHNSON. "I believe he is right, sir. Οι φιλοι, ου φιλος—He had friends, but no friend[2]. Garrick was so diffused, he had no man to whom he wished to unbosom himself. He found people always ready to applaud him, and that always for the same thing: so he saw life with great uniformity." I took

[1] [See *ante*, vol. iii. p. 513.—ED.]

[2] See p. 148 of this vol. and vol. i. p. 182.—BOSWELL.

upon me, for once, to fight with Goliath's weapons, and play the sophist.—" Garrick did not need a friend, as he got from every body all he wanted. What is a friend? One who supports you and comforts you, while others do not. Friendship, you know, sir, is the cordial drop, 'to make the nauseous draught of life go down:' but if the draught be not nauseous, if it be all sweet, there is no occasion for that drop." JOHNSON. "Many men would not be content to live so. I hope I should not. They would wish to have an intimate friend, with whom they might compare minds, and cherish private virtues." One of the company mentioned Lord Chesterfield, as a man who had no friend. JOHNSON. "There were more materials to make friendship in Garrick, had he not been so diffused." BOSWELL. "Garrick was pure gold, but beat out to thin leaf. Lord Chesterfield was tinsel." JOHNSON. "Garrick was a very good man, the cheerfulest man of his age; a decent liver in a profession which is supposed to give indulgence to licentiousness; and a man who gave away freely money acquired by himself. He began the world with a great hunger for money; the son of a half-pay officer, bred in a family whose study was to make four-pence do as much as others made four-pence-halfpenny do. But when he had got money, he was very liberal." I presumed to animadvert on his eulogy on Garrick, in his "Lives of the Poets." "You say, sir, his death eclipsed the gaiety of nations." JOHNSON. "I could not have said more nor less. It is the truth; *eclipsed,* not *extinguished;* and his death *did* eclipse; it was like a storm." BOSWELL. "But why nations? Did his gaiety extend further than his own nation?" JOHNSON. "Why, sir, some exaggeration must be allowed. Besides, nations may be said, if we allow the Scotch to be a nation, and to have gaiety—which they have not. *You* are an exception, though.

Come, gentlemen, let us candidly admit that there is one Scotchman who is cheerful." BEAUCLERK. "But he is a very unnatural Scotchman." I, however, continued to think the compliment to Garrick hyperbolically untrue. His acting had ceased some time before his death; at any rate, he had acted in Ireland but a short time, at an early period of his life, and never in Scotland. I objected also to what appears an anti-climax of praise, when contrasted with the preceding panegyrick—"and diminished the publick stock of harmless pleasure!" "Is not *harmless pleasure* very tame?" JOHNSON. "Nay, sir, harmless pleasure is the highest praise. Pleasure is a word of dubious import; pleasure is in general dangerous, and pernicious to virtue; to be able therefore to furnish pleasure that is harmless, pleasure pure and unalloyed, is as great a power as man can possess." This was, perhaps, as ingenious a defence as could be made; still, however, I was not satisfied [1].

Hawk. Apoph. p. 215. [To Sir J. Hawkins he said, "Garrick, I hear, complains that I am the only popular author of his time who has exhibited no praise of him in print; but he is mistaken, Akenside has forborne to mention him. Some indeed are lavish in their applause of all who come within the compass of their recollection; yet he who praises every body praises nobody; when both scales are equally loaded, neither can preponderate."]

A celebrated wit [2] being mentioned, he said, "One may say of him as was said of a French wit, *Il n'a de l'esprit que contre Dieu.* I have been several times in company with him, but never perceived any strong

[1] [Most readers will agree with Mr. Boswell that this eulogium is not very happily expressed; yet it appears to have been satisfactory to Garrick's immediate friends, for it is inscribed on the cenotaph erected by Mrs. Garrick to his memory in Lichfield Cathedral. *Harwood's History of Lichfield*, p. 86.—ED.]

[2] [It has been suggested to the editor that Mr. George Selwyn is here meant; but he cannot trace any acquaintance between Selwyn and Johnson.—ED.]

power of wit. He produces a general effect by various means; he has a cheerful countenance and a gay voice. Besides, his trade is wit. It would be as wild in him to come into company without merriment, as for a highwayman to take the road without his pistols."

Talking of the effects of drinking, he said, "Drinking may be practised with great prudence; a man who exposes himself when he is intoxicated has not the art of getting drunk; a sober man who happens occasionally to get drunk, readily enough goes into a new company, which a man who has been drinking should never do. Such a man will undertake any thing; he is without skill in inebriation. I used to slink home when I had drunk too much. A man accustomed to self-examination will be conscious when he is drunk, though an habitual drunkard will not be conscious of it. I knew a physician, who for twenty years was not sober; yet in a pamphlet, which he wrote upon fevers, he appealed to Garrick and me for his vindication from a charge of drunkenness. A bookseller[1] (naming him) who got a large fortune by trade was so habitually and equably drunk, that his most intimate friends never perceived that he was more sober at one time than another."

Talking of celebrated and successful irregular practisers in physick, he said, "Taylor[2] was the most ignorant man I ever knew, but sprightly; Ward, the dullest. Taylor challenged me once to talk Latin with him," laughing. "I quoted some of Horace, which he took to be a part of my own speech. He said a few words well enough." BEAUCLERK. "I remember, sir, you said, that Taylor was an instance how far impudence could carry ignorance." Mr. Beauclerk was

[1] [This was Andrew Miller, of whom, when talking one day of the patronage the great sometimes affect to give to literature and literary men, Johnson said, "Andrew Miller is the *Maecenas* of the age."—*Hawk. Apoph.* p. 200.—ED.]

[2] The Chevalier Taylor, the celebrated oculist.—MALONE.

very entertaining this day, and told us a number of short stories in a lively elegant manner, and with that air of *the world* which has I know not what impressive effect, as if there were something more than is expressed, or than perhaps we could perfectly understand. As Johnson and I accompanied Sir Joshua Reynolds in his coach, Johnson said, "There is in Beauclerk a predominance over his company, that one does not like. But he is a man who has lived so much in the world, that he has a short story on every occasion: he is always ready to talk, and is never exhausted."

Johnson and I passed the evening at Miss Reynolds's, Sir Joshua's sister. I mentioned that an eminent friend[1] of ours, talking of the common remark, that affection descends, said, that "this was wisely[2] contrived for the preservation of mankind; for which it was not so necessary that there should be affection from children to parents, as from parents to children; nay, there would be no harm in that view though children should at a certain age eat their parents." JOHNSON. "But, sir, if this were known generally to be the case, parents would not have affection for children." BOSWELL. "True, sir; for it is in expectation of a return that parents are so attentive to their children; and I know a very pretty instance of a little girl of whom her father was very fond, who once, when he was in a melancholy fit, and had gone to bed, persuaded him to rise in good humour by saying, 'My dear papa, please to get up, and let me help you on with your clothes, that I may learn to do it when you are an old man.'"

Soon after this time a little incident occurred, which I will not suppress, because I am desirous that my

[1] [Probably Mr. Burke.—ED.]

[2] [Wisely and mercifully; *wisely* to ensure the preservation and education of children, and *mercifully* to render less afflictive the loss of parents, which, in the course of nature, children must suffer.—ED.]

work should be, as much as is consistent with the strictest truth, an antidote to the false and injurious notions of his character, which have been given by others, and therefore I infuse every drop of genuine sweetness into my biographical cup.

"TO DR. JOHNSON.

"South-Audley-street[1], Monday, 26th April.

"MY DEAR SIR,—I am in great pain with an inflamed foot, and obliged to keep my bed, so am prevented from having the pleasure to dine at Mr. Ramsay's to-day, which is very hard; and my spirits are sadly sunk. Will you be so friendly as to come and sit an hour with me in the evening? I am ever your most faithful and affectionate humble servant,

"JAMES BOSWELL."

"TO MR. BOSWELL.

"Harley-street.

"MR.[2] JOHNSON laments the absence of Mr. Boswell, and will come to him."

He came to me in the evening, and brought Sir Joshua Reynolds. I need scarcely say, that their conversation, while they sat by my bedside, was the most pleasing opiate to pain that could have been administered.

Johnson being now better disposed to obtain information concerning Pope than he was last year[3], sent by me to my Lord Marchmont a present of those volumes of his "Lives of the Poets" which were at this time published, with a request to have permission to wait on him; and his lordship, who had called on him twice, obligingly appointed Saturday, the first of May, for receiving us.

On that morning Johnson came to me from Streatham, and after drinking chocolate at General Paoli's

[1] [The residence of General Paoli.—ED.]

[2] [See, as to his calling himself *Mr.* Johnson, *ante*, vol. i. p. 504, *n.*, and vol. ii. p. 207.—ED.]

[3] See p. 212 of this volume.—BOSWELL.

in South Audley-street, we proceeded to Lord Marchmont's in Curzon-street. His lordship met us at the door of his library, and with great politeness said to Johnson, "I am not going to make an encomium upon *myself*, by telling you the high respect I have for *you*, sir." Johnson was exceedingly courteous; and the interview, which lasted about two hours, during which the earl communicated his anecdotes of Pope, was as agreeable as I could have wished. [His first question, as he told Sir J. Hawkins, was, "What kind of a man was Mr. Pope in his conversation?" His lordship answered, "That if the conversation did not take something of a lively or epigrammatick turn, he fell asleep, or, perhaps, pretended to be so."] When we came out, I said to Johnson, "that, considering his lordship's civility, I should have been vexed if he had again failed to come." "Sir," said he, "I would rather have given twenty pounds than not have come." I accompanied him to Streatham, where we dined, and returned to town in the evening.

Hawk. Apoph. p. 200.

On Monday, May 3, I dined with him at Mr. Dilly's. I pressed him this day for his opinion on the passage in Parnell, concerning which I had in vain questioned him in several letters, and at length obtained it in *due form of law*.

"CASE FOR DR. JOHNSON'S OPINION;

"3d of May, 1779.

"Parnell, in his 'Hermit,' has the following passage:

'To clear this doubt, to know the world by sight,
To find if *books* and *swains* report it right
(For yet by *swains alone* the world he knew,
Whose feet came wand'ring o'er the nightly dew).'

Is there not a contradiction in its being *first* supposed that the Hermit knew *both* what books and swains reported of the world; yet *afterwards* said, that he knew it by swains *alone*?"

" I think it an inaccuracy. He mentions two instructors in the first line, and says he had only one in the next[1]."

This evening I set out for Scotland.

[" TO MRS. ASTON. Pemb. MSS.

" 4th May, 1779.

" DEAR MADAM,—When I sent you the little books, I was not sure that you were well enough to take the trouble of reading them, but have lately heard from Mr. Greeves that you are much recovered. I hope you will gain more and more strength, and live many and many years, and I shall come again to Stowhill, and live as I used to do, with you and dear Mrs. Gastrel.

" I am not well: my nights are very troublesome, and my breath is short; but I know not that it grows much worse. I wish to see you. Mrs. Harvey has just sent to me to dine with her, and I have promised to wait on her to-morrow.

" Mr. Green comes home loaded with curiosities[2], and will be

[1] " I do not," says Mr. Malone, " see any difficulty in this passage, and wonder that Dr. Johnson should have acknowledged it to be *inaccurate*. The Hermit, it should be observed, had no actual experience of the world whatsoever: all his knowledge concerning it had been obtained in two ways; from *books*, and from the *relations* of those country swains who had seen a little of it. The plain meaning, therefore, is, 'To clear his doubts concerning Providence, and to obtain some knowledge of the world by actual experience; to see whether the accounts furnished by books, or by the oral communications of swains, were just representations of it;' [I say *swains*,] for his oral or *vivâ voce* information had been obtained from that part of mankind *alone*, &c. The word *alone* here does not relate to the whole of the preceding line, as has been supposed, but, by a common licence, to the words, *of all mankind*, which are understood, and of which it is restrictive." Mr. Malone, it must be owned, has shown much critical ingenuity in his explanation of this passage. His interpretation, however, seems to me much too recondite. The *meaning* of the passage may be certain enough; but surely the expression is confused, and one part of it contradictory to the other. —BOSWELL. But why *too recondite*? When a meaning is given to a passage by understanding words in an uncommon sense, the interpretation may be said to be *recondite*, and, however ingenious, may be suspected not to be sound; but when words are explained in their ordinary acceptation, and the explication which is fairly deduced from them, without any force or constraint, is also perfectly justified by the context, it surely may be safely accepted; and the calling such an explication *recondite*, when *nothing else can be said against it*, will not make it the less just.—MALONE. [It is odd enough that these critics did not think it worth their while to consult the original for the exact words on which they were exercising their ingenuity. Parnell's words are *not* " *if books* AND *swains*," but " *if books* OR *swains*," which *might* mean, not that books and swains *agreed*, but that they *differed*, and that the Hermit's doubt was excited by the difference between his authorities. This, however, would make no great alteration in the question, on which Dr. Johnson's decision seems just.—ED.]

[2] [Mr. Green, it will be recollected, had a *museum* at Lichfield.—ED.]

Pemb. MSS. able to give his friends new entertainment. When I come, it will be great entertainment to me if I can find you and Mrs. Gastrel well, and willing to receive me. I am, dearest madam, your most humble servant, "SAM. JOHNSON."]

Pearson MS. "TO MRS. LUCY PORTER, IN LICHFIELD.

"4th May, 1779.

"DEAR MADAM,—Mr. Green has informed me that you are much better; I hope I need not tell you that I am glad of it. I cannot boast of being much better; my old nocturnal complaint still pursues me, and my respiration is difficult, though much easier than when I left you the summer before last. Mr. and Mrs. Thrale are well; miss has been a little indisposed; but she is got well again. They have, since the loss of their boy, had two daughters; but they seem likely to want a son.

"I hope you had some books which I sent you. I was sorry for poor Mrs. Adey's death, and am afraid you will be sometimes solitary; but endeavour, whether alone or in company, to keep yourself cheerful. My friends likewise die very fast; but such is the state of man. I am, dear love, your most humble servant, "SAM. JOHNSON."

He had, before I left London, resumed the conversation concerning the appearance of a ghost at Newcastle upon Tyne, which Mr. John Wesley believed, but to which Johnson did not give credit. I was, however, desirous to examine the question closely, and at the same time wished to be made acquainted with Mr. John Wesley; for though I differed from him in some points, I admired his various talents and loved his pious zeal. At my request, therefore, Dr. Johnson gave me a letter of introduction to him.

"TO THE REVEREND MR. JOHN WESLEY.

"3d May, 1779.

"SIR,—Mr. Boswell, a gentleman who has been long known to me, is desirous of being known to you, and has asked this recommendation, which I give him with great willingness, because I think it very much to be wished that worthy and religious men should be acquainted with each other. I am, sir, your most humble servant, "SAM. JOHNSON."

Mr. Wesley being in the course of his ministry at Edinburgh, I presented this letter to him, and was very politely received. I begged to have it returned to me, which was accordingly done. His state of the evidence as to the ghost did not satisfy me.

[He made this year his usual excursion into the midland counties; but his visit was shortened by the alarming illness of Mr. Thrale.] ED.

[" TO MRS. THRALE.

" Lichfield, 29th May, 1779. Letters, vol. ii. p. 45.

" I have now been here a week, and will try to give you my journal, or such parts of it as are fit, in my mind, for communication.

" On Friday, We set out about twelve, and lay at Daventry.

" On Saturday, We dined with Rann at Coventry. He intercepted us at the town's end. I saw Tom Johnson, who had hardly life to know that I was with him. I hear he is since dead. In the evening I came to Lucy, and walked to Stowhill. Mrs. Aston was gone or going to bed. I did not see her.

" Sunday.—After dinner I went to Stowhill, and was very kindly received. At night I saw my old friend Brodhurst—you know him—the playfellow of my infancy, and gave him a guinea.

" Monday.—Dr. Taylor came, and we went with Mrs. Cobb to Greenhill Bower. I had not seen it, perhaps, for fifty years. It is much degenerated. Every thing grows old. Taylor is to fetch me next Saturday.

" Mr. Green came to see us, and I ordered some physick.

" Tuesday.—Physick, and a little company. I dined, I think, with Lucy both Monday and Tuesday.

" Wednesday, Thursday.—I had a few visits, from Peter Garrick among the rest, and dined at Stowhill. My breath very short.

" Friday.—I dined at Stowhill. I have taken physick four days together.

" Saturday.—Mrs. Aston took me out in her chaise, and was very kind. I dined with Mrs. Cobb, and came to Lucy, with whom I found, as I had done the first day, Lady Smith and Miss Vyse."]

Letters, vol. i. p. 47.

["TO MRS. THRALE.

"Ashbourne, 14th June, 1779.

"Your account of Mr. Thrale's illness[1] is very terrible; but when I remember that he seems to have it peculiar to his constitution—that whatever distemper he has, he always has his head affected—I am less frighted. The seizure was, I think, not apoplectical, but hysterical, and therefore not dangerous to life. I would have you, however, consult such physicians as you think you can best trust. Bromfield seems to have done well, and, by his practice, seems not to suspect an apoplexy. That is a solid and fundamental comfort. I remember Dr. Marsigli, an Italian physician, whose seizure was more violent than Mr. Thrale's, for he fell down helpless; but his case was not considered as of much danger, and he went safe home, and is now a professor at Padua. His fit was considered as only hysterical."]

p. 51.

["TO MRS. THRALE.

"Ashbourne, 17th June, 1779.

"It is certain that your first letter did not alarm me in proportion to the danger, for indeed it did not describe the danger as it was. I am glad that you have Heberden; and hope his restoratives and his preservatives will both be effectual. In the preservatives, dear Mr. Thrale must concur; yet what can he reform? or what can he add to his regularity and temperance? He can only sleep less. We will do, however, all we can. I go to Lichfield to-morrow, with intent to hasten to Streatham.

"Both Mrs. Aston and Dr. Taylor have had strokes of the palsy. The lady was sixty-eight, and at that age has gained ground upon it; the doctor is, you know, not young, and he is quite well, only suspicious of every sensation in the peccant arm. I hope my dear *master*'s case is yet slighter, and that, as his age is less, his recovery will be more perfect. Let him keep his thoughts diverted and his mind easy."]

p. 54.

["TO HENRY THRALE, ESQ.

"Lichfield, 23d June, 1779.

"DEAR SIR,—To show you how well I think of your health, I have sent you an hundred pounds to keep for me. It will come within one day of quarter-day, and that day you must

[1] [A serious apoplectic attack, which was the precursor of another of the same nature which terminated his existence in the course of the ensuing year.—ED.]

give me. I came by it in a very uncommon manner, and would not confound it with the rest. Letters, vol. ii. p. 54.

"My wicked *mistress* talks as if she thought it possible for me to be indifferent or negligent about your health or hers. If I could have done any good, I had not delayed an hour to come to you, and I will come very soon to try if my advice can be of any use, or my company of any entertainment.

"What can be done, you must do for yourself. Do not let any uneasy thought settle in your mind. Cheerfulness and exercise are your great remedies. Nothing is for the present worth your anxiety. *Vivere læti* is one of the great rules of health. I believe it will be good to ride often, but never to weariness; for weariness is itself a temporary resolution of the nerves, and is therefore to be avoided. Labour is exercise continued to fatigue; exercise is labour used only while it produces pleasure.

"Above all, keep your mind quiet. Do not think with earnestness even of your health, but think on such things as may please without too much agitation; among which, I hope, is, dear sir, your, &c."]

["DR. JOHNSON TO MISS REYNOLDS. Reyn. MS.

"27th July, 1779.

"DEAR MADAM,—I have sent what I can for your German friend[1]. At this time it is very difficult to get any money, and I cannot give much. I am, madam, your most affectionate and most humble servant, "SAM. JOHNSON."]

I did not write to Johnson, as usual, upon my return to my family; but tried how he would be affected by my silence. Mr. Dilly sent me a copy of a note which he received from him on the 13th of July, in these words:

"TO MR. DILLY.

"SIR,—Since Mr. Boswell's departure, I have never heard from him. Please to send word what you know of him, and whether you have sent my books to his lady. I am, &c.

"SAM. JOHNSON."

[1] [It is due to the memory of Dr. Johnson's inexhaustible charity to insert this otherwise insignificant note. When he says that he cannot give *much*, let it be recollected, that his only fixed income was his pension of 300*l.* a year, and that he had four or five elemosynary inmates in his house.—ED.]

My readers will not doubt that his solicitude about me was very flattering.

"TO JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

"13th July, 1779.

"DEAR SIR,—What can possibly have happened, that keeps us two such strangers to each other? I expected to have heard from you when you came home; I expected afterwards. I went into the country and returned; and yet there is no letter from Mr. Boswell. No ill, I hope, has happened; and if ill should happen, why should it be concealed from him who loves you? Is it a fit of humour, that has disposed you to try who can hold out longest without writing? If it be, you have the victory. But I am afraid of something bad; set me free from my suspicions.

"My thoughts are at present employed in guessing the reason of your silence: you must not expect that I should tell you any thing, if I had any thing to tell. Write, pray write to me, and let me know what is or what has been the cause of this long interruption. I am, dear sir, your most affectionate humble servant,

"SAM. JOHNSON."

"TO DR. SAMUEL JOHNSON.

"Edinburgh, 17th July, 1779.

"MY DEAR SIR,—What may be justly denominated a supine indolence of mind has been my state of existence since I last returned to Scotland. In a livelier state I had often suffered severely from long intervals of silence on your part; and I had even been chid by you for expressing my uneasiness. I was willing to take advantage of my insensibility, and while I could bear the experiment, to try whether your affection for me would, after an unusual silence on my part, make you write first. This afternoon I have had a very high satisfaction by receiving your kind letter of inquiry, for which I most gratefully thank you. I am doubtful if it was right to make the experiment; though I have gained by it. I was beginning to grow tender, and to upbraid myself, especially after having dreamt two nights ago that I was with you. I, and my wife, and my four children, are all well. I would not delay one post to answer your letter; but as it is late, I have not time to do more. You shall soon hear from me, upon many and various particulars; and I shall never again put you to any test. I am, with veneration, my dear sir, your most obliged and faithful humble servant,

"JAMES BOSWELL."

On the 22d of July, I wrote to him again; and gave him an account of my last interview with my worthy friend, Mr. Edward Dilly, at his brother's house at Southill in Bedfordshire, where he died soon after I parted from him, leaving me a very kind remembrance of his regard.

I informed him that Lord Hailes, who had promised to furnish him with some anecdotes for his "Lives of the Poets," had sent me three instances of Prior's borrowing from *Gombauld*, in *Recueil des Poetes*, tome 3. Epigram "To John I owed great obligation," p. 25. "To the Duke of Noailles," p. 32. "Sauntering Jack and idle Joan," p. 25.

My letter was a pretty long one, and contained a variety of particulars; but he, it should seem, had not attended to it; for his next to me was as follows:

"TO JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

"Streatham, 9th Sept. 1779.

"MY DEAR SIR,—Are you playing the same trick again, and trying who can keep silence longest? Remember that all tricks are either knavish or childish; and that it is as foolish to make experiments upon the constancy of a friend, as upon the chastity of a wife.

"What can be the cause of this second fit of silence, I cannot conjecture; but after one trick, I will not be cheated by another, nor will harass my thoughts with conjectures about the motives of a man who, probably, acts only by caprice. I therefore suppose you are well, and that Mrs. Boswell is well too, and that the fine summer has restored Lord Auchinleck. I am much better than you left me; I think I am better than when I was in Scotland.

"I forgot whether I informed you that poor Thrale has been in great danger. Mrs. Thrale likewise has miscarried, and been much indisposed[1]. Every body else is well. Langton is in

[1] [The Editor suspects that the verses on Mrs. Thrale's *thirty-fifth* birthday, which he had placed under the year 1777 (*ante*, vol. iii. p. 463), should rather come in here, as he finds in Johnson's letters to that lady (*post*, 14th August, 1780) that *her thirty-fifth* and *his* seventieth year coincided.—ED.]

camp. I intend to put Lord Hailes's description of Dryden [1] into another edition, and, as I know his accuracy, wish he would consider the dates, which I could not always settle to my own mind.

"Mr. Thrale goes to Brighthelmstone, about Michaelmas, to be jolly and ride a-hunting. I shall go to town, or perhaps to Oxford. Exercise and gaiety, or rather carelessness, will, I hope, dissipate all remains of his malady; and I likewise hope, by the change of place, to find some opportunities of growing yet better myself. I am, dear sir, your humble servant,

"SAM. JOHNSON."

My readers will not be displeased at being told every slight circumstance of the manner in which Dr. Johnson contrived to amuse his solitary hours. He sometimes employed himself in chymistry, sometimes in watering and pruning a vine, sometimes in small experiments, at which those who may smile should recollect that there are moments which admit of being soothed only by trifles [2].

Piozzi, p. 182-4. [Dr. Johnson was always exceeding fond of chymistry; and they made up a sort of laboratory at Streatham one summer, and diverted themselves with drawing essences and colouring liquors. But the danger in which Mr. Thrale found Dr. Johnson one day (in Mrs. Thrale's absence), with the children and servants assembled round him to see some experiments performed, put an end to all that sort of entertain-

[1] Which I communicated to him from his lordship, but it has not yet been published. I have a copy of it.—BOSWELL. The few notices concerning Dryden, which Lord Hailes had collected, the authour afterwards gave me.—MALONE.

[2] In one of his manuscript Diaries, there is the following entry, which marks his curious minute attention: "July 26, 1768.—I shaved my nail by accident in whetting the knife, about an eighth of an inch from the bottom, and about a fourth from the top. This I measure that I may know the growth of nails; the whole is about five-eighths of an inch." Another of the same kind appears August 7, 1779: "*Partem brachii dextri carpo proximam et cutem pectoris circa mamillam dextram rasi, ut notum fieret quanto temporis pili renovarentur.*" And, "Aug. 15, 1783:—I cut from the vine 41 leaves, which weighed five oz. and a half, and eight scruples: I lay them upon my bookcase, to see what weight they will lose by drying."—BOSWELL.

ment; as Mr. Thrale was persuaded that his short-sight would have occasioned his destruction in a moment, by bringing him close to a fierce and violent flame. Indeed, it was a perpetual miracle that he did not set himself on fire reading a-bed, as was his constant custom, when quite unable even to keep clear of mischief with our best help; and accordingly the foretops of all his wigs were burned by the candle down to the very network. Piozzi, p. 183.

Future experiments in chemistry, however, were too dangerous, and Mr. Thrale insisted that we should do no more towards finding the philosopher's stone.]

On the 20th of September I defended myself against his suspicion of me, which I did not deserve; and added, "Pray let us write frequently. A whim strikes me, that we should send off a sheet once a week, like a stage-coach, whether it be full or not; nay, though it should be empty. The very sight of your handwriting would comfort me; and were a sheet to be thus sent regularly, we should much oftener convey something, were it only a few kind words."

My friend, Colonel James Stuart [1], second son of the Earl of Bute, who had distinguished himself as a good officer of the Bedfordshire militia, had taken a publick-spirited resolution to serve his country in its difficulties, by raising a regular regiment, and taking the command of it himself. This, in the heir of the immense property of Wortley, was highly honourable. Having been in Scotland recruiting, he obligingly asked me to accompany him to Leeds, then the headquarters of his corps; from thence to London for a short time, and afterwards to other places to which

[1] [Who assumed successively the names of Wortley and Mackenzie, but was best known as Mr. Stuart Wortley. He was the father of Lord Wharncliffe, and died in 1814.—Ed.]

the regiment might be ordered. Such an offer, at a time of the year when I had full leisure, was very pleasing; especially as I was to accompany a man of sterling good sense, information, discernment, and conviviality, and was to have a second crop, in one year, of London and Johnson. Of this I informed my illustrious friend in characteristical warm terms, in a letter dated the 30th of September, from Leeds.

On Monday, October 4, I called at his house before he was up. He sent for me to his bedside, and expressed his satisfaction at this incidental meeting, with as much vivacity as if he had been in the gaiety of youth. He called briskly, "Frank, go and get coffee, and let us breakfast *in splendour*."

During this visit to London I had several interviews with him, which it is unnecessary to distinguish particularly. I consulted him as to the appointment of guardians to my children in case of my death. "Sir," said he, "do not appoint a number of guardians. When there are many, they trust one to another, and the business is neglected. I would advise you to choose only one: let him be a man of respectable character, who, for his own credit, will do what is right; let him be a rich man, so that he may be under no temptation to take advantage; and let him be a man of business, who is used to conduct affairs with ability and expertness, to whom, therefore, the execution of the trust will not be burdensome."

Letters, v. ii. p. 60.

["TO MRS. THRALE.

"5th Oct. 1779.

"When Mr. Boswell waited on Mr. Thrale in Southwark, I directed him to watch all appearances with close attention, and bring me his observations. At his return he told me, that without previous intelligence he should not have discovered that Mr. Thrale had been lately ill."]

[" TO MRS. THRALE. Letters, vol. ii. p. 61.

" London, 8th Oct. 1779.

" On Sunday the gout left my ankles, and I went very commodiously to church. On Monday night I felt my feet uneasy. On Tuesday I was quite lame: that night I took an opiate, having first taken physick and fasted. Towards morning on Wednesday the pain remitted. Bozzy came to me, and much talk we had. I fasted another day; and on Wednesday night could walk tolerably. On Thursday, finding myself mending, I ventured on my dinner, which I think has a little interrupted my convalescence. To-day I have again taken physick, and eaten only some stewed apples.—I hope to starve it away. It is now no worse than it was at Brighthelmstone."]

On Sunday, October 10, we dined together at Mr. Strahan's. The conversation having turned on the prevailing practice of going to the East Indies in quest of wealth;—JOHNSON: "A man had better have ten thousand pounds at the end of ten years passed in England, than twenty thousand pounds at the end of ten years passed in India, because you must compute what you *give* for money; and the man who has lived ten years in India has given up ten years of social comfort, and all those advantages which arise from living in England. The ingenious Mr. Brown, distinguished by the name of *Capability Brown*, told me, that he was once at the seat of Lord Clive, who had returned from India with great wealth; and that he showed him at the door of his bed-chamber a large chest, which he said he had once had full of gold; upon which Brown observed, 'I am glad you can bear it so near your bed-chamber.'"

We talked of the state of the poor in London. JOHNSON. "Saunders Welch, the justice, who was once high-constable of Holborn, and had the best opportunities of knowing the state of the poor, told me, that I under-rated the number, when I computed that twenty a week, that is, above a thousand a year,

died of hunger; not absolutely of immediate hunger; but of the wasting and other diseases which are the consequences of hunger. This happens only in so large a place as London, where people are not known. What we are told about the great sums got by begging is not true: the trade is overstocked. And, you may depend upon it, there are many who cannot get work. A particular kind of manufacture fails: those who have been used to work at it can, for some time, work at nothing else. You meet a man begging; you charge him with idleness: he says, 'I am willing to labour. Will you give me work?'—'I cannot.'—'Why, then, you have no right to charge me with idleness.'"

We left Mr. Strahan's at seven, as Johnson had said he intended to go to evening prayers. As we walked alone, he complained of a little gout in his toe, and said, "I sha'n't go to prayers to-night: I shall go to-morrow: whenever I miss church on a Sunday, I resolve to go another day. But I do not always do it." This was a fair exhibition of that vibration between pious resolutions and indolence, which many of us have too often experienced.

I went home with him, and we had a long quiet conversation.

I read him a letter from Dr. Hugh Blair concerning Pope (in writing whose life he was now employed), which I shall insert as a literary curiosity[1].

[1] The Rev. Dr. Law, Bishop of Carlisle, in the preface to his valuable edition of Archbishop King's "Essay on the Origin of Evil," mentions that the principles maintained in it had been adopted by Pope in his "Essay on Man;" and adds, "The fact, notwithstanding such denial (Bishop Warburton's), might have been strictly verified by an unexceptionable testimony, viz. that of the late Lord Bathurst, who saw the very same system of the τὸ βέλτιον (taken from the archbishop) in Lord Bolingbroke's own hand, lying before Mr. Pope, while he was composing his Essay." This is respectable evidence: but that of Dr. Blair is more direct from the fountain-head, as well as more full. Let me add to it that of Dr. Joseph Warton: "The late Lord Bathurst repeatedly assured me that he had read the whole scheme of 'the Essay on Man,' in the hand-

"TO JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

"Broughton-park, 21st Sept. 1779.

"DEAR SIR,—In the year 1763, being at London, I was carried by Dr. John Blair, Prebendary of Westminster, to dine at old Lord Bathurst's, where we found the late Mr. Mallet, Sir James Porter, who had been ambassador at Constantinople, the late Dr. Macaulay, and two or three more. The conversation turning on Mr. Pope, Lord Bathurst told us, that 'The Essay on Man' was originally composed by Lord Bolingbroke in prose, and that Mr. Pope did no more than put it into verse: that he had read Lord Bolingbroke's manuscript in his own hand-writing; and remembered well, that he was at a loss whether most to admire the elegance of Lord Bolingbroke's prose, or the beauty of Mr. Pope's verse. When Lord Bathurst told this, Mr. Mallet bade me attend, and remember this remarkable piece of information; as, by the course of Nature, I might survive his lordship, and be a witness of his having said so. The conversation was indeed too remarkable to be forgotten. A few days after, meeting with you, who were then also at London, you will remember that I mentioned to you what had passed on this subject, as I was much struck with this anecdote. But what ascertains my recollection of it, beyond doubt, is, that being accustomed to keep a journal of what passed when I was at London, which I wrote out every evening, I find the particulars of the above information, just as I have now given them, distinctly marked; and am thence enabled to fix this conversation to have passed on Friday, the 22d of April, 1763.

"I remember also distinctly, (though I have not for this the authority of my journal), that the conversation going on concerning Mr. Pope, I took notice of a report which had been sometimes propagated that he did not understand Greek. Lord Bathurst said to me that he knew that to be false; for that part of the Iliad was translated by Mr. Pope in his house in the country; and that in the morning when they assembled at breakfast, Mr. Pope used frequently to repeat, with great rapture, the Greek lines which he had been translating, and then to give them his version of them, and to compare them together.

"If these circumstances can be of any use to Dr. Johnson, you have my full liberty to give them to him. I beg you will, at the same time, present to him my most respectful compliments,

writing of Bolingbroke, and drawn up in a series of propositions, which Pope was to versify and illustrate."—*Essay on the Genius and Writings of Pope*, vol. ii. p. 62.—BOSWELL.

with best wishes for his success and fame in all his literary undertakings. I am, with great respect, my dearest sir, your most affectionate, and obliged humble servant,

"HUGH BLAIR."

JOHNSON. "Depend upon it, sir, this is too strongly stated. Pope may have had from Bolingbroke the philosophick *stamina* of his Essay; and admitting this to be true, Lord Bathurst did not intentionally falsify. But the thing is not true in the latitude that Blair seems to imagine; we are sure that the poetical imagery, which makes a great part of the poem, was Pope's own. It is amazing, sir, what deviations there are from precise truth, in the account which is given of almost every thing. I told Mrs. Thrale, 'You have so little anxiety about truth, that you never tax your memory with the exact thing.' Now what is the use of the memory to truth, if one is careless of exactness? Lord Hailes's 'Annals of Scotland' are very exact; but they contain mere dry particulars. They are to be considered as a Dictionary. You know such things are there; and may be looked at when you please. Robertson paints; but the misfortune is, you are sure he does not know the people whom he paints; so you cannot suppose a likeness. Characters should never be given by an historian, unless he knew the people whom he describes, or copies from those who knew them."

BOSWELL. "Why, sir, do people play this trick which I observe now, when I look at your grate, putting the shovel against it to make the fire burn?" JOHNSON. "They play the trick, but it does not make the fire burn[1]. *There* is a better (setting the

[1] It certainly does make the fire burn: by repelling the air, it throws a blast on the fire, and so performs the part in some degree of a blower or bellows.—KEARNEY. [Dr. Kearney's observation applies only to the *shovel*; but by those who have faith in the experiment, the *poker* is supposed to be equally efficacious. After all, it is possible that, in old times, a large shovel used to be applied to obstruct the upper orifice, and so force the air through the grate, and the practice may have outlived the instrument which gave rise to it.—ED.]

poker perpendicularly up at right angles with the grate). In days of superstition they thought, as it made a cross with the bars, it would drive away the witch."

BOSWELL. "By associating with you, sir, I am always getting an accession of wisdom. But perhaps a man, after knowing his own character—the limited strength of his own mind—should not be desirous of having too much wisdom, considering, *quid valeant humeri*, how little he can carry." JOHNSON. "Sir, be as wise as you can; let a man be *aliis lætus, sapiens sibi:*

> 'Though pleased to see the dolphins play,
> I mind my compass and my way[1].'

You may be wise in your study in the morning, and gay in company at a tavern in the evening. Every man is to take care of his own wisdom and his own virtue, without minding too much what others think."

He said "Dodsley first mentioned to me the scheme of an English Dictionary; but I had long thought of it." BOSWELL. "You did not know what you were undertaking." JOHNSON. "Yes, sir, I knew very well what I was undertaking, and very well how to do it, and have done it very well." BOSWELL. "An excellent climax! and it *has* availed you. In your preface you say, 'What would it avail me in this gloom of solitude?' You have been agreeably mistaken."

In his life of Milton, he observes, "I cannot but remark a kind of respect, perhaps unconsciously, paid to this great man by his biographers: every house in which he resided is historically mentioned, as if it were an injury to neglect naming any place that he

[1] "The Spleen," a poem, [by Mr. Matthew Green.]—BOSWELL.

honoured by his presence." I had, before I read this observation, been desirous of showing that respect to Johnson, by various inquiries. Finding him this evening in a very good humour, I prevailed on him to give me an exact list of his places of residence, since he entered the metropolis as an authour, which I subjoin in a note [1].

I mentioned to him a dispute between a friend of mine and his lady, concerning conjugal infidelity, which my friend had maintained was by no means so bad in the husband as in the wife. JOHNSON. "Your friend was in the right, sir. Between a man and his Maker it is a different question: but between a man and his wife, a husband's infidelity is nothing. They are connected by children, by fortune, by serious considerations of community. Wise married women don't trouble themselves about infidelity in their husbands." BOSWELL. "To be sure there is a great difference between the offence of infidelity in a man and that of his wife." JOHNSON. "The difference is boundless. The man imposes no bastards upon his wife [2]."

[1] [Here followed the list of residences, which will be found *ante*, v. i. p. 81.—ED.]

[2] [This seems too *narrow* an illustration of a "*boundless* difference." The introduction of a bastard into a family, though a great injustice and a great crime, is only one consequence (and that an occasional and accidental one) of a greater crime and a more afflicting injustice. The precaution of Julia, alluded to *ante*, v. iii. p. 390, did not render her innocent. In a moral and in a religious view, the guilt is no doubt equal in man or woman; but have not both Dr. Johnson and Mr. Boswell overlooked a *social* view of this subject? which is perhaps the true reason of the greater indulgence which is generally afforded to the infidelity of the man—I mean the effect on the personal character of the different sexes. The crime does not seem to alter or debase the qualities of the *man*, in any essential degree; but when the superior purity and delicacy of the *woman* is *once contaminated* it is destroyed—*facilis descensus Averni*—she generally falls into utter degradation, and thence, probably, it is that society makes a distinction conformable to its own interests—it connives at the offence of men, because men are not much deteriorated *as members of general society* by the offence, and it is severe against the offence of women, because women, as members of society, are utterly degraded by it. This view of the subject will be illustrated by a converse proposition—for instance: The world thinks not the worse, nay rather the better, of a *woman* for wanting *courage;* but such a defect in a *man* is wholly unpardonable,

Here it may be questioned, whether Johnson was entirely in the right. I suppose it will not be controverted, that the difference in the degree of criminality is very great, on account of consequences: but still it may be maintained, that, independent of moral obligation, infidelity is by no means a light offence in a husband; because it must hurt a delicate attachment, in which a mutual constancy is implied, with such refined sentiments as Massinger has exhibited in his play of "The Picture." Johnson probably at another time would have admitted this opinion. And let it be kept in remembrance, that he was very careful not to give any encouragement to irregular conduct. A gentleman, not adverting to the distinction made by him upon this subject, supposed a case of singular perverseness in a wife, and heedlessly said, "That then he thought a husband might do as he pleased with a safe conscience." JOHNSON. "Nay, sir, this is wild indeed (smiling); you must consider that fornication is a crime in a single man, and you cannot have more liberty by being married."

[On all occasions he was inclined to attribute to the *marital* character great exemption and authority.] ED.

[When any disputes arose between our married acquaintance, however, Dr. Johnson always sided with the husband, "whom," he said, "the woman had probably provoked so often, she scarce knew when or how she had disobliged him first. Women," said Dr. Johnson, "give great offence by a contemptuous spirit of non-compliance on petty occasions. The Piozzi, p. 115.

because, as Johnson wisely and wittily said, "he who has not the virtue of courage has no security for any other virtue." Society, therefore, requires *chastity* from *women* as it does *courage* from *men*. The Editor, in suggesting this merely-worldly consideration, hopes not to be misunderstood as offering any defence of a breach, on the part of a man, of divine and human laws; he by *no* means goes so far as Dr. Johnson does in the text, but he has thought it right to suggest a difference on a most important subject, which had been overlooked by that great moralist, or is, at least, not stated by Mr. Boswell.—ED.]

Piozzi, p. 117. man calls his wife to walk with him in the shade, and she feels a strange desire just at that moment to sit in the sun; he offers to read her a play, or sing her a song, and she calls the children in to disturb them, or advises him to seize that opportunity of settling the family accounts. Twenty such tricks will the faithfulest wife in the world not refuse to play, and then look astonished when the fellow fetches in a mistress. Boarding-schools were established," continued he, "for the conjugal quiet of the parents: the two partners cannot agree which child to fondle, nor how to fondle them, so they put the young ones to school and remove the cause of contention. The little girl pokes her head, the mother reproves her sharply: 'Do not mind your mamma,' says the father, 'my dear, but do your own way.' The mother complains to me of this: 'Madam,' said I, 'your husband is right all the while; he is with you but two hours of the day perhaps, and then you tease him by making the child cry. Are not ten hours enough for tuition? And are the hours of pleasure so frequent in life, that when a man gets a couple of quiet ones to spend in familiar chat with his wife, they must be poisoned by petty mortifications? Put Missey to school; she will learn to hold her head like her neighbours, and you will no longer torment your family for want of other talk.'"]

Hawk. Apoph. p. 210. [To the same effect, Hawkins relates that he used to say, that in all family disputes the odds were in favour of the husband, from his superior knowledge of life and manners: he was, nevertheless, extremely fond of the company and conversation of women, and had certainly very correct notions as to the basis on which matrimonial connexions should be formed. He always advised his friends, when they were about to marry, to unite themselves to a woman of a pious and

religious frame of mind. "Fear of the world, and a sense of honour," said he, "may have an effect upon a man's conduct and behaviour; a woman without religion is without the only motive that in general can incite her to do well." Hawk. Apoph. p. 202.

When some one asked him for what he should marry, he replied, "First, for virtue; secondly, for wit; thirdly, for beauty; and fourthly, for money."] [He occasionally said very contemptuous things of the sex; but was exceedingly angry when Mrs. Thrale told Miss Reynolds that he said, "It was well managed of some one to leave his affairs in the hands of his wife, because, in matters of business," said he, "no woman stops at integrity." "This was, I think," added Mrs. Thrale, "the only sentence I ever observed him solicitous to explain away after he had uttered it."] Piozzi, p. 210.

He this evening expressed himself strongly against the Roman Catholics, observing, "In every thing in which they differ from us, they are wrong." He was even against the invocation of saints; in short, he was in the humour of opposition.

Having regretted to him that I had learnt little Greek, as is too generally the case in Scotland; that I had for a long time hardly applied at all to the study of that noble language, and that I was desirous of being told by him what method to follow; he recommended as easy helps, Sylvanus's "First Book of the Iliad;" Dawson's "Lexicon to the Greek New Testament;" and "Hesiod," with "Pasoris Lexicon" at the end of it.

["TO MRS. THRALE. Letters, vol. ii. p. 63.

"London, 11th Oct. 1779.

"I do not see why you should trouble yourself with physicians while Mr. Thrale grows better. Company and bustle will, I hope, complete his cure. Let him gallop over the Downs in the morning, call his friends about him to dinner,

Letters, vol. ii., p. 63.

and frisk in the rooms at night, and outrun time and outface misfortune.

"Notwithstanding all authorities against bleeding, Mr. Thrale bled himself well ten days ago.

"You will lead a jolly life, and perhaps think little of me; but I have been invited twice to Mrs. Vesey's *conversation*, but have not gone. The gout that was in my ankles, when Queeney criticised my gait, passed into my toe, but I have hunted it, and starved it, and it makes no figure. It has drawn some attention, for Lord and Lady Lucan sent to inquire after me. This is all the news that I have to tell you. Yesterday I dined with Mr. Strahan, and Boswell was there. We shall be both to-morrow at Mr. Ramsay's.]

On Tuesday, October 12, I dined with him at Mr. Ramsay's, with Lord Newhaven[1], and some other company, none of whom I recollect, but a beautiful Miss Graham[2], a relation [niece] of his lordship's, who asked Dr. Johnson to hob or nob with her. He was flattered by such pleasing attention, and politely told her, he never drank wine; but if she would drink a glass of water, he was much at her service. She accepted. "Oho, sir!" said Lord Newhaven, "you are caught." JOHNSON. "Nay, I do not see *how I am caught;* but if I am caught, I don't want to get free again. If I am caught, I hope to be kept." Then when the two glasses of water were brought, smiling placidly to the young lady, he said, "Madam, let us *reciprocate.*"

Lord Newhaven and Johnson carried on an argument for some time concerning the Middlesex election. Johnson said, "Parliament may be considered as bound by law, as a man is bound where there is nobody to tie the knot. As it is clear that the house of commons may expel, and expel again and again,

[1] [William Mayne, esq. was created a baronet in 1763; a privy-counsellor in Ireland in 1766; and in 1776 advanced to the Irish peerage by the title of Baron Newhaven. He took an active part in the intrigues, jobs, and squabbles, which constituted the Irish politics of his day.—ED.]

[2] Now the lady of Sir Henry Dashwood, bart.—BOSWELL.

why not allow of the power to incapacitate for that parliament, rather than have a perpetual contest kept up between parliament and the people." Lord Newhaven took the opposite side; but respectfully said, "I speak with great deference to you, Dr. Johnson; I speak to be instructed." This had its full effect on my friend. He bowed his head almost as low as the table to a complimenting nobleman, and called out, "My lord, my lord, I do not desire all this ceremony; let us tell our minds to one another quietly." After the debate was over, he said, "I have got lights on the subject to-day, which I had not before." This was a great deal from him, especially as he had written a pamphlet upon it.

He observed, "The house of commons was originally not a privilege of the people, but a check for the crown, on the house of lords. I remember, Henry the Eighth wanted them to do something; they hesitated in the morning, but did it in the afternoon. He told them, 'It is well you did; or half your heads should have been upon Temple-bar.' But the house of commons is now no longer under the power of the crown, and therefore must be bribed." He added, "I have no delight in talking of publick affairs."

Of his fellow-collegian [1], the celebrated Mr. George Whitefield, he said, "Whitefield never drew as much attention as a mountebank does: he did not draw attention by doing better than others, but by doing what was strange. Were Astley [2] to preach a sermon

[1] [George Whitfield, or Whitefield, did not enter at Pembroke College before November, 1732, more than twelve months after Johnson's name was off the books, and nearly three years after he had ceased to be resident at Oxford; so that, strictly speaking, they were not fellow-collegians, though they were both of the same college.—HALL.]

[2] [Philip Astley, a celebrated horse-rider, who first exhibited equestrian pantomimes, in which his son (who survived his father but a short time) rode with great grace and agility. Astley had at once theatres in Paris, London, and Dublin, and migrated with his actors, biped and quadruped, from one to the other.—ED.]

standing upon his head on a horse's back, he would collect a multitude to hear him; but no wise man would say he had made a better sermon for that. I never treated Whitefield's ministry with contempt; I believe he did good. He had devoted himself to the lower classes of mankind, and among them he was of use. But when familiarity and noise claim the praise due to knowledge, art, and elegance, we must beat down such pretensions."

What I have preserved of his conversation during the remainder of my stay in London at this time is only what follows: I told him that when I objected to keeping company with a notorious infidel, a celebrated friend of ours said to me, "I do not think that men who live laxly in the world, as you and I do, can with propriety assume such an authority: Dr. Johnson may, who is uniformly exemplary in his conduct. But it is not very consistent to shun an infidel to-day, and get drunk to-morrow." JOHNSON. "Nay, sir, this is sad reasoning. Because a man cannot be right in all things, is he to be right in nothing? Because a man sometimes gets drunk, is he therefore to steal? This doctrine would very soon bring a man to the gallows."

After all, however, it is a difficult question how far sincere christians should associate with the avowed enemies of religion; for in the first place, almost every man's mind may be more or less "corrupted by evil communications;" secondly, the world may very naturally suppose that they are not really in earnest in religion, who can easily bear its opponents; and thirdly, if the profane find themselves quite well received by the pious, one of the checks upon an open declaration of their infidelity, and one of the probable chances of obliging them seriously to reflect, which their being shunned would do, is removed.

He, I know not why, showed upon all occasions an aversion to go to Ireland, where I proposed to him that we should make a tour. JOHNSON. "It is the last place that I should wish to travel." BOSWELL. "Should you not like to see Dublin, sir?" JOHNSON. "No, sir; Dublin is only a worse capital." BOSWELL. "Is not the Giant's-causeway worth seeing?" JOHNSON. "Worth seeing? yes; but not worth going to see."

Yet he had a kindness for the Irish nation; and thus generously expressed himself to a gentleman from that country, on the subject of an Union which artful politicians have often had in view: "Do not make an union with us, sir. We should unite with you only to rob you. We should have robbed the Scotch, if they had had any thing of which we could have robbed them."

Of an acquaintance of ours, whose manners and every thing about him, though expensive, were coarse, he said, "Sir, you see in him vulgar prosperity."

A foreign minister of no very high talents, who had been in his company for a considerable time quite overlooked, happened luckily to mention that he had read some of his "*Rambler*" in Italian, and admired it much. This pleased him greatly; he observed that the title had been translated *Il Genio errante*; though I have been told it was rendered more ludicrously *Il Vagabondo*; and finding that this minister gave such a proof of his taste, he was all attention to him, and on the first remark which he made, however simple, exclaimed, "The ambassadour says well; His excellency observes—;" and then he expanded and enriched the little that had been said in so strong a manner, that it appeared something of consequence. This was exceedingly entertaining to the company

who were present, and many a time afterwards it furnished a pleasant topick of merriment. "*The ambassadour says well*" became a laughable term of applause when no mighty matter had been expressed.

Letters, vol. ii. p. 65.

["TO MRS. THRALE.

"16th October, 1779.

"My foot gives me very little trouble; but it is not yet well. I have dined, since you saw me, not so often as once in two days. But I am told how well I look; and I really think I get more mobility. I dined on Tuesday with Ramsay, and on Thursday with Paoli, who talked of coming to see you, till I told him of your migration.

"Mrs. Williams is not yet returned; but discord and discontent reign in my humble habitation as in the palaces of monarchs. Mr. Levet and Mrs. Desmoulins have vowed eternal hate. Levet is the more insidious, and wants me to turn her out. Poor Williams writes word that she is no better, and has left off her physick. Mr. Levet has seen Dr. Lewis, who declares himself hopeless of doing her any good. Lawrence desponded some time ago.

"I thought I had a little fever some time, but it seems to be starved away. Bozzy says, he never saw me so well."]

Reyn. MSS.

["DR. JOHNSON TO MISS REYNOLDS.

"19th October, 1779.

"DEAREST MADAM,—You are extremely kind in taking so much trouble. My foot is almost well; and one of my first visits will certainly be to Dover-street[1].

"You will do me a great favour if you will buy for me the prints of Mr. Burke, Mr. Dyer, and Dr. Goldsmith, as you know good impressions.

"If any of your own pictures are engraved, buy them for me. I am fitting up a little room with prints. I am, dear madam, your most humble servant, "SAM. JOHNSON."]

I left London on Monday, October 18, and accompanied Colonel Stuart to Chester, where his regiment was to lie for some time.

[1] [Where Miss Reynolds lived.—ED.]

"MR. BOSWELL TO DR. JOHNSON.

"Chester, 22d October, 1770.

"MY DEAR SIR,—It was not till one o'clock on Monday morning that Colonel Stuart and I left London; for we chose to bid a cordial adieu to Lord Mountstuart, who was to set out on that day on his embassy to Turin. We drove on excellently, and reached Lichfield in good time enough that night. The colonel had heard so preferable a character of the George, that he would not put up at the Three Crowns, so that I did not see our host, Wilkins. We found at the George as good accommodation as we could wish to have, and I fully enjoyed the comfortable thought that *I was in Lichfield again*. Next morning it rained very hard; and as I had much to do in a little time, I ordered a postchaise, and between eight and nine sallied forth to make a round of visits. I first went to Mr. Green, hoping to have had him to accompany me to all my other friends; but he was engaged to attend the Bishop of Sodor and Man, who was then lying at Lichfield very ill of the gout. Having taken a hasty glance at the additions to Green's museum [1], from which it was not easy to break away, I next went to the Friary, where I at first occasioned some tumult in the ladies, who were not prepared to receive *company* so early; but my *name*, which has by wonderful felicity come to be closely associated with yours, soon made all easy; and Mrs. Cobb [2] and Miss Adey reassumed their seats at the breakfast-table, which they had quitted with some precipitation. They received me with the kindness of an old acquaintance; and, after we had joined in a cordial chorus to *your* praise, Mrs. Cobb gave *me* the high satisfaction of hearing that you said, 'Boswell is a man who I believe never left a house without leaving a wish for his return.' And she afterwards added, that she bid you tell me, that if ever I came to Lichfield, she hoped I would take a bed at the Friary. From thence I drove to Peter Garrick's [3], where I also found a very flattering welcome. He appeared to me to enjoy his usual cheerfulness; and he very kindly asked me to come when I could, and pass a week with him. From Mr. Garrick's I went to the Palace to wait on Mr. Seward. I was first entertained

[1] [See *ante*, vol. iii. p. 353.—ED.]

[2] [Mrs. Cobb was the daughter of Mr. Hammond, an apothecary (*ante*, v. i. p. 11), and the widow of a mercer, who had retired from business, and resided at the Friary. Miss Adey was her niece, daughter of the town-clerk of Lichfield: she married William Sneyd, Esq. of Belmont-house, near Cheadle, and died 1829, æt. 87.—HARWOOD.]

[3] [See *ante*, vol. iii. p. 126, *n.* and p. 350.—ED.]

by his lady and daughter, he himself being in bed with a cold, according to his valetudinary custom. But he desired to see me: and I found him dressed in his black gown, with a white flannel night-gown above it; so that he looked like a Dominican friar. He was good-humoured and polite; and under his roof too my reception was very pleasing. I then proceeded to Stowhill, and first paid my respects to Mrs. Gastrell, whose conversation I was not willing to quit. But my sand-glass was now beginning to run low, as I could not trespass too long on the colonel's kindness, who obligingly waited for me; so I hastened to Mrs. Aston's, whom I found much better than I feared I should; and there I met a brother-in-law of these ladies, who talked much of you, and very well too, as it appeared to me. It then only remained to visit Mrs. Lucy Porter, which I did, I really believe, with sincere satisfaction on both sides. I am sure I was glad to see her again; and as I take her to be very honest, I trust she was glad to see me again, for she expressed herself so that I could not doubt of her being in earnest. What a great keystone of kindness, my dear sir, were you that morning; for we were all held together by our common attachment to you! I cannot say that I ever passed two hours with more self-complacency than I did those two at Lichfield. Let me not entertain any suspicion that this is idle vanity. Will not you confirm me in my persuasion, that he who finds himself so regarded has just reason to be happy?

"We got to Chester about midnight on Tuesday; and here again I am in a state of much enjoyment. Colonel Stuart and his officers treat me with all the civility I could wish; and I play my part admirably. *Lætus aliis, sapiens sibi,* the classical sentence which you, I imagine, invented the other day, is exemplified in my present existence. The bishop, to whom I had the honour to be known several years ago, shows me much attention; and I am edified by his conversation. I must not omit to tell you, that his lordship admires, very highly, your prefaces to the Poets. I am daily obtaining an extension of agreeable acquaintance, so that I am kept in animated variety; and the study of the place itself, by the assistance of books and of the bishop, is sufficient occupation. Chester pleases my fancy more than any town I ever saw. But I will not enter upon it at all in this letter.

"How long I shall stay here I cannot yet say. I told a very pleasing young lady[1], niece to one of the prebendaries, at whose

[1] Miss Letitia Barnston.—BOSWELL.

house I saw her, 'I have come to Chester, madam, I cannot tell how; and far less can I tell how I am to get away from it.' Do not think me too juvenile. I beg it of you, my dear sir, to favour me with a letter while I am here, and add to the happiness of a happy friend, who is ever, with affectionate veneration, most sincerely yours, "JAMES BOSWELL.

"If you do not write directly, so as to catch me here, I shall be disappointed. Two lines from you will keep my lamp burning bright."

["TO MRS. ASTON. Pemb. MSS.

"Bolt-court, Fleet-street, 25th Oct. 1779.

"DEAREST MADAM,—Mrs. Gastrell is so kind as to write to me, and yet I always write to you; but I consider what is written to either as written to both.

"Publick affairs do not seem to promise much amendment, and the nation is now full of distress. What will be the event of things none can tell. We may still hope for better times.

"My health, which I began to recover when I was in the country, continues still in a good state: it costs me, indeed, some physick, and something of abstinence, but it pays the cost. I wish, dear madam, I could hear a little of your improvements.

"Here is no news. The talk of the invasion seems to be over. But a very turbulent session of parliament is expected; though turbulence is not likely to do any good. Those are happiest who are out of the noise and tumult. There will be no great violence of faction at Stowhill; and that it may be free from that and all other inconvenience and disturbance is the sincere wish of all your friends. I am, dear madam, your most humble servant, "SAM. JOHNSON."]

"TO JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

"London, 27th Oct. 1779.

"DEAR SIR,—Why should you importune me so earnestly to write? Of what importance can it be to hear of distant friends, to a man who finds himself welcome wherever he goes, and makes new friends faster than he can want them? If to the delight of such universal kindness of reception any thing can be added by knowing that you retain my good-will, you may indulge yourself in the full enjoyment of that small addition.

"I am glad that you made the round of Lichfield with so much success. The oftener you are seen, the more you will be liked. It was pleasing to me to read that Mrs. Aston was so well, and that Lucy Porter was so glad to see you.

"In the place where you now are, there is much to be observed; and you will easily procure yourself skilful directors. But what will you do to keep away the *black dog*[1] that worries you at home? If you would, in compliance with your father's advice, inquire into the old tenures and old charters of Scotland, you would certainly open to yourself many striking scenes of the manners of the middle ages. The feudal system, in a country half-barbarous, is naturally productive of great anomalies in civil life. The knowledge of past times is naturally growing less in all cases not of publick record; and the past time of Scotland is so unlike the present, that it is already difficult for a Scotchman to image the economy of his grandfather. Do not be tardy nor negligent; but gather up eagerly what can yet be found[2].

"We have, I think, once talked of another project, a history of the late insurrection in Scotland, with all its incidents. Many falsehoods are passing into uncontradicted history. Voltaire, who loved a striking story, has told what he could not find to be true.

"You may make collections for either of these projects, or for both, as opportunities occur, and digest your materials at leisure. The great direction which Burton has left to men disordered like you is this, *Be not solitary, be not idle*; which I would thus modify:—If you are idle, be not solitary; if you are solitary, be not idle.

"There is a letter for you, from your humble servant,

"SAM. JOHNSON."

Pemb. MSS. ["TO MRS. ASTON.

"Bolt-court, Fleet-street, 5th Nov. 1779.

"DEAREST MADAM,—Having had the pleasure of hearing from Mr. Boswell that he found you better than he expected, I will not forbear to tell you how much I was delighted with the news. May your health increase and increase till you are as well as you can wish yourself, or I can wish you!

"My friends tell me that my health improves too. It is cer-

[1] [This was a phrase in the familiar society at Streatham to express hypochondriacal anxieties of mind. It is frequently used in the correspondence between Johnson and Mrs. Thrale, and is equivalent to the "*dragons*" of Madame de Sévigné.—ED.]

[2] I have a valuable collection made by my father, which, with some additions and illustrations of my own, I intend to publish. I have some hereditary claim to be an antiquary; not only from my father, but as being descended, by the mother's side, from the able and learned Sir John Skene, whose merit bids defiance to all the attempts which have been made to lessen his fame.—BOSWELL.

tain that I use both physick and abstinence; and my endeavours have been blessed with more success than at my age I could reasonably hope. I please myself with the thoughts of visiting you next year in so robust a state, that I shall not be afraid of the hill between Mrs. Gastrell's house and yours, nor think it necessary to rest myself between Stowhill and Lucy Porter's. Pemb. MSS.

"Of publick affairs I can give you no very comfortable account. The invasion has vanished for the present, as I expected. I never believed that any invasion was intended.

"But whatever we have escaped, we have done nothing, nor are likely to do better another year. We, however, who have no part of the nation's welfare intrusted to our management, have nothing to do but to serve God, and leave the world submissively in his hands.

"All trade is dead, and pleasure is scarce alive. Nothing almost is purchased but such things as the buyer cannot do without, so that a general sluggishness and general discontent are spread over the town. All the trades of luxury and elegance are nearly at a stand. What the parliament, when it meets, will do, and indeed what it ought to do, is very difficult to say.

"Pray set Mrs. Gastrell, who is a dear good lady, to write to me from time to time; for I have great delight in hearing from you, especially when I hear any good news of your health. I am, dear madam, your most humble servant,

"SAM. JOHNSON."]

"TO DR. SAMUEL JOHNSON.

"Carlisle, 7th Nov. 1779.

"MY DEAR SIR,—That I should importune you to write to me at Chester is not wonderful, when you consider what an avidity I have for delight; and that the *amor* of pleasure, like the *amor nummi*, increases in proportion with the quantity which we possess of it. Your letter, so full of polite kindness and masterly counsel, came like a large treasure upon me, while already glittering with riches. I was quite enchanted at Chester, so that I could with difficulty quit it. But the enchantment was the reverse of that of Circé; for so far was there from being any thing sensual in it, that I was *all mind*. I do not mean all reason only; for my fancy was kept finely in play. And why not? If you please I will send you a copy or an abridgment of my Chester journal, which is truly a log-book of felicity.

"The bishop[1] treated me with a kindness which was very

[1] [Doctor Porteus, afterwards Bishop of London, in which see he died. —ED.]

flattering. I told him that you regretted you had seen so little of Chester. His lordship bade me tell you, that he should be glad to show you more of it. I am proud to find the friendship with which you honour me is known in so many places.

"I arrived here late last night. Our friend the dean[1] has been gone from hence some months; but I am told at my inn, that he is very *populous* (popular). However, I found Mr. Law[2], the archdeacon, son to the bishop, and with him I have breakfasted and dined very agreeably. I got acquainted with him at the assizes here, about a year and a half ago. He is a man of great variety of knowledge, uncommon genius, and, I believe, sincere religion. I received the holy sacrament in the cathedral in the morning, this being the first Sunday in the month; and was at prayers there in the morning. It is divinely cheering to me to think that there is a cathedral so near Auchinleck; and I now leave Old England in such a state of mind as I am thankful to God for granting me.

"The *black dog*[3] that worries me at home I cannot but dread; yet as I have been for some time past in a military train, I trust I shall *repulse* him. To hear from you will animate me like the sound of a trumpet; I therefore hope, that soon after my return to the northern field, I shall receive a few lines from you.

"Colonel Stuart did me the honour to escort me in his carriage to show me Liverpool, and from thence back again to Warrington, where we parted[4]. In justice to my valuable wife, I must inform you she wrote to me, that as I was so happy, she would not be so selfish as to wish me to return sooner than business absolutely required my presence. She made my clerk write to me a post or two after to the same purpose, by commission from her; and this day a kind letter from her met me at the post-office here, acquainting me that she and the little ones were well, and expressing all their wishes for my return home. I am, more and more, my dear sir, your affectionate and obliged humble servant, "JAMES BOSWELL."

"TO JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

"London, 13th Nov. 1779.

"DEAR SIR,—Your last letter was not only kind but fond. But I wish you to get rid of all intellectual excesses, and neither

[1] [Dr. Percy.—ED.]

[2] [Dr. Edmond Law, master of St. Peter's College, Cambridge, Bishop of Carlisle, in which see he died in 1787.—ED.]

[3] [See *ante*, p. 292.—ED.]

[4] His regiment was afterwards ordered to Jamaica, where he accompanied it, and almost lost his life by the climate. This impartial order I should think a sufficient refutation of the idle rumour that "there was still something behind the throne greater than the throne itself."—BOSWELL.

to exalt your pleasures, nor aggravate your vexations, beyond their real and natural state. Why should you not be as happy at Edinburgh as at Chester? *In culpa est animus, qui se non effugit usquam.* Please yourself with your wife and children, and studies, and practice.

"I have sent a petition[1] from Lucy Porter, with which I leave it to your discretion whether it is proper to comply. Return me her letter, which I have sent, that you may know the whole case, and not be seduced to any thing that you may afterwards repent. Miss Doxy perhaps you know to be Mr. Garrick's niece.

"If Dean Percy can be popular at Carlisle, he may be very happy. He has in his disposal two livings, each equal or almost equal in value to the deanery; he may take one himself, and give the other to his son.

"How near is the cathedral to Auchinleck, that you are so much delighted with it? It is, I suppose, at least an hundred and fifty miles off. However, if you are pleased, it is so far well.

"Let me know what reception you have from your father, and the state of his health. Please him as much as you can, and add no pain to his last years.

"Of our friends here I can recollect nothing to tell you. I have neither seen nor heard of Langton. Beauclerk is just returned from Brighthelmstone, I am told, much better. Mr. Thrale and his family are still there; and his health is said to be visibly improved. He has not bathed, but hunted.

"At Bolt-court there is much malignity, but of late little open hostility[2]. I have had a cold, but it is gone.

"Make my compliments to Mrs. Boswell, &c. I am, sir, your humble servant, "SAM. JOHNSON."

On November 22, and December 21, I wrote to him from Edinburgh, giving a very favourable report of the family of Miss Doxy's lover;—that after a good deal of inquiry I had discovered the sister of Mr. Francis Stewart, one of his amanuenses when writing his Dictionary;—that I had, as desired by him, paid her a guinea for an old pocket-book of her brother's,

[1] Requesting me to inquire concerning the family of a gentleman who was then paying his addresses to Miss Doxy.—BOSWELL.

[2] See *ante*, page 231.—BOSWELL.

which he had retained; and that the good woman, who was in very moderate circumstances, but contented and placid, wondered at his scrupulous and liberal honesty, and received the guinea as if sent her by Providence;—that I had repeatedly begged of him to keep his promise to send me his letter to Lord Chesterfield; and that this *memento*, like *Delenda est Carthago*, must be in every letter that I should write to him, till I had obtained my object.

Letters, vol. ii. p. 70.

["TO MRS. THRALE.

"London, 25th Oct. 1779.

"On Saturday I walked to Dover-street and back. Yesterday I dined with Sir Joshua. There was Mr. Elliot[1] of Cornwall, who inquired after my master. At night I was bespoken by Lady Lucan; but she was taken ill, and the assembly was put off. I am to dine with Renny to-morrow.

* * * * * *

"Some old gentlewomen at the next door are in very great distress. Their little annuity comes from Jamaica, and is therefore uncertain; and one of them has had a fall, and both are very helpless; and the poor have you to help them. Persuade my master to let me give them something for him. It will be bestowed upon real want."]

In 1780, the world was kept in impatience for the completion of his "Lives of the Poets," upon which he was employed so far as his indolence allowed him to labour.

I wrote to him on January 1 and March 13, sending him my notes of Lord Marchmont's information concerning Pope;—complaining that I had not heard from him for almost four months, though he was two letters in my debt; that I had suffered again from melancholy;—hoping that he had been in so much better company (the Poets), that he had not time to think of his distant friends; for if that were the case,

[1] [First Lord Eliot. See *post. sub* 30th March, 1781.—Ed.]

I should have some recompense for my uneasiness; —that the state of my affairs did not admit of my coming to London this year; and begging he would return me Goldsmith's two poems, with his lines marked.

His friend Dr. Lawrence having now suffered the greatest affliction to which a man is liable, and which Johnson himself had felt in the most severe manner, Johnson wrote to him in an admirable strain of sympathy and pious consolation.

"TO DR. LAWRENCE.

"20th January, 1780.

"DEAR SIR,—At a time when all your friends ought to show their kindness, and with a character which ought to make all that know you your friends, you may wonder that you have yet heard nothing from me.

"I have been hindered by a vexatious and incessant cough, for which within these ten days I have been bled once, fasted four or five times, taken physick five times, and opiates, I think, six. This day it seems to remit.

"The loss, dear sir, which you have lately suffered, I felt many years ago, and know therefore how much has been taken from you, and how little help can be had from consolation. He that outlives a wife whom he has long loved, sees himself disjoined from the only mind that has the same hopes, and fears, and interest; from the only companion with whom he has shared much good or evil; and with whom he could set his mind at liberty, to retrace the past or anticipate the future. The continuity of being is lacerated; the settled course of sentiment and action is stopped; and life stands suspended and motionless, till it is driven by external causes into a new channel. But the time of suspense is dreadful.

"Our first recourse in this distressed solitude is, perhaps for want of habitual piety, to a gloomy acquiescence in necessity. Of two mortal beings, one must lose the other. But surely there is a higher and better comfort to be drawn from the consideration of that Providence which watches over all, and a belief that the living and the dead are equally in the hands of God, who will reunite those whom he has separated, or who sees that it is best not to reunite. I am, dear sir, your most affectionate and most humble servant, "SAM. JOHNSON."

Ed. [In the spring of this year Dr. Johnson's society lost one of its brightest ornaments by the death of Mr. Beauclerk[1]. The charms of conversation—like those of acting—are transient; and of the social talents of Beauclerk, as of the dramatic powers of Garrick, little can remain, but the general testimony of cotemporaries to their excellence. Mr. Hardy has preserved Lord Charlemont's opinion of Mr. Beauclerk, with whom he was much connected. "His conversation," said his lordship, "could scarcely be equalled. He possessed an exquisite taste, various accomplishments, and the most perfect good breeding. He was eccentric—often querulous—entertaining a contempt for the generality of the world, which the politeness of his manners could not always conceal; but to those whom he liked most generous and friendly. Devoted at one moment to pleasure, and at another to literature, sometimes absorbed in play, and sometimes in books, he was, altogether, one of the most accomplished and, when in good humour, and surrounded by those who suited his fancy, one of the most agreeable men that could possibly exist." Mr. Hardy has preserved a few of Mr. Beauclerk's letters to Lord Charlemont, which are probably characteristic of his style, and one or two which touch on Johnson and his society the reader will perhaps not think misplaced here.

Life of Charlemont, vol. i. p. 344.

"MR. BEAUCLERK TO THE EARL OF CHARLEMONT.

"Adelphi, 20th Nov. 1773.

"My dear lord,—I delayed writing to you, as I had flattered myself that I should have been able to have paid you a visit at Dublin before this time; but I have been prevented, not by my own negligence and indolence, but by various matters. I am rejoiced to find by your letter that Lady Charlemont is as you wish. I have yet remaining so much bene-

[1] [He died 11th March, in his forty-first year.—Ed.]

volence towards mankind as to wish that there may be a son of yours educated by you as a specimen of what mankind ought to be. Life of Charlm. vol. i. p. 344.

"Goldsmith the other day put a paragraph into the newspapers in praise of Lord Mayor Townshend. The same night he happened to sit next to Lord Shelburne, at Drury-lane; I mentioned the circumstance of the paragraph to him, and he said to Goldsmith that he hoped he had mentioned nothing about Malagrida in it. 'Do you know,' answered Goldsmith, 'that I never could conceive the reason why they call you Malagrida, *for* Malagrida was a very good sort of man[1].' You see plainly what he meant to say, but that happy turn of expression is peculiar to himself. Mr. Walpole says that this story is a picture of Goldsmith's whole life.

"Johnson has been confined for some weeks in the Isle of Sky; we hear that he was obliged to swim over to the main land, taking hold of a cow's tail. Be that as it may, Lady Di[2] has promised to make a drawing of it.

"Our poor *club* is in a miserable state of decay; unless you come and relieve it, it will certainly expire. Would you imagine that Sir Joshua Reynolds is extremely anxious to be a member at Almack's[3]? You see what noble ambition will make a man attempt. That den is not yet opened, consequently I have not been there; so, for the present, I am clear upon that score. I suppose your confounded Irish politics take up your whole attention at present. If they could but have obtained the absentee tax, the *Irish* parliament would have been perfect. They would have voted themselves out of parliament, and lessened their estates one half of the value. This is patriotism with a vengeance! There is nothing new at present in the literary world. Mr. Jones[4], of our *club*, is going to publish an account, in Latin, of the eastern poetry, with extracts translated verbatim in verse. I will order Elmsly[5] to send it to you, when it comes out; I fancy it will be a very pretty book. Goldsmith has written a prologue for Mrs. Yates, which she spoke

[1] [See *post*, 23d March, 1783.—Ed.]

[2] [*Ante*, vol. ii. p. 230. Lady Di's pencil was much celebrated, and Mr. Walpole built a room for the reception of some of her drawings, which he called the Beauclerk closet: but the editor has never seen any of her ladyship's works which seemed to him to merit, as mere works of art, such high reputation.—Ed.]

[3] [At this period a gaming club.—Ed.]

[4] [Sir William Jones.—Ed.]

[5] [The bookseller.—Ed.]

Life of Charlm. vol. i. p. 344.

this evening before the Opera. It is very good. You will see it soon in all the newspapers, otherwise I would send it to you. I hope to hear in your next letter that you have fixed your time for returning to England. We cannot do without you. If you do not come here, I will bring all the *club* over to Ireland, to live with you, and that will drive you here in your own defence. Johnson shall spoil your books, Goldsmith pull your flowers, and Boswell *talk*[1] to you: stay then if you can. Adieu, my dear lord. Pray make my compliments to Lady Charlemont, and believe me to be very sincerely and affectionately yours, "T. BEAUCLERK."

p. 347.

"MR. BEAUCLERK TO LORD CHARLEMONT.

"Adelphi, 24th Dec. 1773.

"MY DEAR LORD,—I hope you received a letter from me some time ago; I mention this that I may not appear worse than I am, and likewise to hint to you that, when you receive this, you will be two letters in my debt. I hope your parliament has finished all its absurdities, and that you will be at leisure to come over here to attend your club, where you will do much more good than all the patriots in the world ever did to any body, viz. you will make very many of your friends extremely happy; and you know Goldsmith has informed us that no form of government ever contributed either to the happiness or misery of any one.

"I saw a letter from Foote, with an account of an Irish tragedy; the subject is Manlius, and the last speech which he makes, when he is pushed off from the Tarpeian rock, is, 'Sweet Jesus, where am I going?' Pray send me word if this is true. We have a good comedy[2] here which is good for nothing; bad as it is, however, it succeeds very well, and has almost killed Goldsmith with envy.

"I have no news either literary or political to send you. Every body, except myself and about a million of vulgars, are in the country. I am closely confined, as Lady Di expects to be every hour. I am, my dear lord, very sincerely and affectionately yours, "T. BEAUCLERK."]

[1] [The reader will observe Mr. Beauclerk's estimate of Boswell's conversation.—ED.]

[2] [Probably "The School for Wives."—ED.]

"TO JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

"8th April, 1780.

"DEAR SIR,—Well, I had resolved to send you the Chesterfield letter [1], but I will write once again without it. Never impose tasks upon mortals. To require two things is the way to have them both undone.

"For the difficulties which you mention in your affairs, I am sorry; but difficulty is now very general: it is not therefore less grievous, for there is less hope of help. I pretend not to give you advice, not knowing the state of your affairs; and general counsels about prudence and frugality would do you little good. You are, however, in the right not to increase your own perplexity by a journey hither; and I hope that by staying at home you will please your father.

"Poor dear Beauclerk—*nec, ut soles, dabis joca.* His wit and his folly, his acuteness and maliciousness, his merriment and reasoning, are now over. Such another will not often be found among mankind. He directed himself to be buried by the side of his mother, an instance of tenderness which I hardly expected. He has left his children to the care of Lady Di, and if she dies, of Mr. Langton, and of Mr. Leicester his relation, and a man of good character. His library has been offered to sale to the Russian ambassador [2].

"Dr. Percy, notwithstanding all the noise of the newspapers, has had no literary loss [3]. Clothes and moveables were burnt to the value of about one hundred pounds; but his papers, and I think his books, were all preserved.

"Poor Mr. Thrale has been in extreme danger from an apoplectical disorder, and recovered, beyond the expectation of his physicians: he is now at Bath, that his mind may be quiet, and Mrs. Thrale and Miss are with him.

"Having told you what has happened to your friends, let me say something to you of yourself. You are always complaining of melancholy, and I conclude from those complaints that you are fond of it. No man talks of that which he is de-

[1] [See it *ante*, vol. i. p. 249.—ED.]

[2] His library was sold by publick auction in April and May, 1781, for £5011.—MALONE.

[3] By a fire in Northumberland-house, where he had an apartment in which I have passed many an agreeable hour.—BOSWELL. [" It has been asserted that Dr. Percy sustained great losses at the fire at Northumberland-house; but I was present when his apartments were in flames, and can explicitly declare that all his books and papers were safely removed."—*Cradock's Memoirs*, p. 43. —ED.]

sirous to conceal, and every man desires to conceal that of which he is ashamed. Do not pretend to deny it; *manifestum habemus furem.* Make it an invariable and obligatory law to yourself, never to mention your own mental diseases. If you are never to speak of them, you will think on them but little; and if you think little of them, they will molest you rarely. When you talk of them, it is plain that you want either praise or pity: for praise there is no room, and pity will do you no good; therefore, from this hour speak no more, think no more, about them.

"Your transaction with Mrs. Stewart[1] gave me great satisfaction. I am much obliged to you for your attention. Do not lose sight of her. Your countenance may be of great credit, and of consequence of great advantage to her. The memory of her brother is yet fresh in my mind: he was an ingenious and worthy man.

"Please to make my compliments to your lady and to the young ladies. I should like to see them, pretty loves! I am, dear sir, yours affectionately, "SAM. JOHNSON."

Mrs. Thrale being now at Bath with her husband, the correspondence between Johnson and her was
ED. carried on briskly, * * *[2] [and affords us all the information which we have of this portion of his domestic life.]

Letters, vol. ii. p. 96.

["DR. JOHNSON TO MRS. THRALE.

"London, 6th April, 1780[3].

"I have not quite neglected my *Lives*. *Addison* is a long one, but it is done. *Prior* is not short, and that is done too. I am upon *Rowe*, which cannot fill much paper.

"Seward (Mr. William) called on me one day and read Spence[4]. I dined yesterday at Mr. Jodrell's in a great deal of

[1] [See *ante*, p. 295.—ED.]

[2] [Here Mr. Boswell had prefaced the introduction of the letter of the 28th April by the following words: "I shall present my readers with one of her original letters to him at this time, which will amuse them probably more than those well-written but studied epistles which she has inserted in her collection, because it exhibits the easy vivacity of their literary intercourse. It is also of value as a key to Johnson's answer, which she has printed by itself, and of which I shall subjoin extracts." This insinuation against Mrs. Thrale is quite unfounded: her letters are certainly any thing but *studied epistles*; and that one which Mr. Boswell has published is not more easy and unaffected, nor in any respect of a different character from those she herself has given.—ED.]

[3] [Dated in Mrs. Thrale's volume 1779 by mistake.—ED.]

[4] [Spence's very amusing anecdotes, which had been lent Johnson in manuscript: they were not printed till 1820.—ED.]

company. On Sunday I dine with Dr. Lawrence, and at night go to Mrs. Vesey. I have had a little cold, or two, or three; but I did not much mind them, for they were not very bad."]

["DR. JOHNSON TO MRS. LUCY PORTER. Pearson MSS.

"London, 8th April, 1780.

"DEAR MADAM,—I am indeed but a sluggish correspondent, and know not whether I shall much mend: however, I will try.

"I am glad that your oysters proved good, for I would have every thing good that belongs to you; and would have your health good, that you may enjoy the rest. My health is better than it has been for some years past; and, if I see Lichfield again, I hope to walk about it.

"Your brother's request I have not forgotten. I have bought as many volumes as contain about an hundred and fifty sermons, which I will put in a box, and get Mr. Mathias to send him. I shall add a letter.

"We have been lately much alarmed at Mr. Thrale's. He has had a stroke, like that of an apoplexy; but he has at last got so well as to be at Bath, out of the way of trouble and business, and is likely to be in a short time quite well.

"I hope all the Lichfield ladies are quite well, and that every thing is prosperous among them.

"A few weeks ago I sent you a little stuff-gown, such as is all the fashion at this time. Yours is the same with Mrs. Thrale's, and Miss bought it for us. These stuffs are very cheap, and are thought very pretty.

"Pray give my compliments to Mr. Pearson, and to every body, if any such body there be, that cares about me.

"I am now engaged about the rest of the Lives, which I am afraid will take some time, though I purpose to use despatch; but something or other always hinders. I have a great number to do, but many of them will be short.

"I have lately had colds: the first was pretty bad, with a very troublesome and frequent cough; but by bleeding and physick it was sent away. I have a cold now, but not bad enough for bleeding.

"For some time past, and indeed ever since I left Lichfield last year, I have abated much of my diet, and am, I think, the better for abstinence. I can breathe and move with less difficulty; and I am as well as people of my age commonly are. I hope we shall see one another again some time this year. I am, dear love, your humble servant, "SAM. JOHNSON."]

Letters, vol. ii. p. 99.

["TO MRS. THRALE.

"11th April, 1780.

"On Sunday I dined with poor Lawrence, who is deafer than ever. When he was told that Dr. Moisy visited Mr. Thrale, he inquired for what, and said that there was nothing to be done which Nature would not do for herself. On Sunday evening I was at Mr. Vesey's, and there was inquiry about my *master;* but I told them all good. There was Dr. Barnard of Eton, and we made a noise all the evening: and there was Pepys, and Wraxal till I drove him away.

* * * * * * *

"[Miss] Burney said she would write—she told you a fib. She writes nothing to me. She can write home fast enough. I have a good mind not to let her know that Dr. Bernard, to whom I had recommended her novel[1], speaks of it with great commendation; and that the copy which she lent me has been read by Dr. Lawrence three times over. And yet what a gipsy it is! She no more minds me than if I were a Brangton.

* * * * * * *

p. 100. "You are at all places of high resort, and bring home hearts by dozens; while I am seeking for something to say of men about whom I know nothing but their verses, and sometimes very little of *them*. Now I have begun, however, I do not despair of making an end. Mr. Nicholls holds that Addison is the most *taking* of all that I have done. I doubt they will not be done before you come away.

"Now you think yourself the first writer in the world for a letter about nothing. Can you write such a letter as this? so miscellaneous, with such noble disdain of regularity, like Shakspeare's works? such graceful negligence of transition, like the ancient enthusiasts? The pure voice of nature and of friendship. Now of whom shall I proceed to speak? Of whom but Mrs. Montagu? Having mentioned Shakspeare and Nature, does not the name of Montagu force itself upon me[2]? Such were the transitions of the ancients, which now seem abrupt because the intermediate idea is lost to modern understandings."

p. 102. "15th April, 1780.

"I thought to have finished Rowe's Life to-day, but I have had

[1] [Evelina.—Ed.]

[2] [Compare this with two former phrases, in which Shakspeare and Mrs. Montagu are mentioned (*ante*, vol. ii. p. 68 and p. 89), and wonder at the inconsistencies to which the greatest genius and the highest spirit may be reduced!—Ed.]

five or six visiters who hindered me; and I have not been quite well. Next week I hope to despatch four or five of them." Letters.

"18th April, 1780. vol. ii.

"You make verses, and they are read in publick, and I know nothing about them. This very crime, I think, broke the link of amity between Richardson and Miss M———[1], after a tenderness and confidence of many years." p. 105.

"London, 25th April, 1780. p. 107.

"How do you think I live? On Thursday I dined with Hamilton[2], and went thence to Mrs. Ord[3]. On Friday, with much company, at Mrs. Reynolds'. On Saturday at Dr. Bell's. On Sunday at Dr. Burney's, with your two sweets from Kennington, who are both well: at night came Mrs. Ord, Mr. Harris, and Mr. Greville, &c. On Monday with Reynolds; at night with Lady Lucan; to-day with Mr. Langton; to-morrow with the Bishop of St. Asaph; on Thursday with Mr. Bowles; Friday ———; Saturday at the academy[4]; Sunday with Mr. Ramsay.

"I told Lady Lucan how long it was since she sent to me; but she said I must consider how the world rolls about her.

* * * * * * *

"I not only scour the town from day to day, but many visiters come to me in the morning, so that my work makes no great progress, but I will try to quicken it. I should certainly like to bustle a little among you, but I am unwilling to quit my post till I have made an end."] p. 108.

"MRS. THRALE TO DR. JOHNSON.

"Bath, Friday, 28th April.

"I had a very kind letter from you yesterday, dear sir, with a most circumstantial date[5].

"Yesterday's evening was passed at Mrs. Montagu's. There was Mr. Melmoth[6]. I do not like him *though*, nor he me. It

[1] [Probably Miss Mulso, afterwards Mrs. Chapone, one of Richardson's female coterie.—Ed.]

[2] [Probably the Right Honourable W. G. Hamilton.—Ed.]

[3] [This lady (a celebrated *blue stocking* of her day) was Miss Anne Dillingham, the only daughter of Mr. Dillingham, an eminent surgeon. She was early married to Mr. Ord, of Northumberland, who, on his decease, left her a very large property. She died in May, 1808, at the age of 82. See *Gent. Mag.* for July, 1808.—Ed.]

[4] [The annual dinner on opening the Exhibition.—Ed.]

[5] [This alludes to Johnson's frequent advice to her and Miss Thrale to *date* their letters, a laudable habit, which, however, he himself did not always practise.—Ed.]

[6] [William Melmoth, the author of Fitzosborne's Letters, and the translator

was expected we should have pleased each other: he is, however, just tory enough to hate the Bishop of Peterborough [1] for whiggism, and whig enough to abhor you for toryism.

"Mrs. Montagu flattered him finely; so he had a good afternoon on't. This evening we spend at a concert. Poor Queeney's sore eyes have just released her: she had a long confinement, and could neither read nor write, so my *master* treated her, very good-naturedly, with the visits of a young woman in this town, a tailor's daughter, who professes musick, and teaches so as to give six lessons a day to ladies, at five and threepence a lesson. Miss Burney says she is a great performer; and I respect the wench for getting her living so prettily. She is very modest and pretty-mannered, and not seventeen years old.

"You live in a fine whirl indeed. If I did not write regularly, you would half forget me, and that would be very wrong, for I *felt* my regard for you in my *face* last night, when the criticisms were going on.

"This morning it was all connoisseurship. We went to see some pictures painted by a gentleman-artist, Mr. Taylor, of this place. *My master* makes one every where, and has got a good dawdling companion to ride with him now. * * * * * He looks well enough, but I have no notion of health for a man whose mouth cannot be sewed up. Burney and I and Queeney tease him every meal he eats, and Mrs. Montagu is quite serious with him; but what *can* one do? He will eat, I think; and if he does eat, I know he will not live. It makes me very unhappy, but I must bear it. Let me always have your friendship. I am, most sincerely, dear sir, your faithful servant, "H. L. T."

"DR. JOHNSON TO MRS. THRALE.

"London, 1st May, 1780.

"DEAREST MADAM,—Mr. Thrale never will live abstinently, till he can persuade himself to live by rule [2]. * * * Encourage, as you can, the musical girl.

"Nothing is more common than mutual dislike, where mutual approbation is particularly expected. There is often on both sides a vigilance not over-benevolent; and as attention is strongly excited, so that nothing drops unheeded, any difference in taste or opinion, and some difference where there is no restraint will commonly appear, immediately generates dislike.

of the Letters of Pliny and Cicero, and some of the minor works of the latter. He was about Johnson's age, but long survived him, dying in 1799, ætat. 89. —ED.]

[1] Dr. John Hinchcliffe.—BOSWELL.

[2] I have taken the liberty to leave out a few lines.—BOSWELL.

"Never let criticisms operate on your face or your mind; it is very rarely that an authour is hurt by his criticks. The blaze of reputation cannot be blown out, but it often dies in the socket. A very few names may be considered as perpetual lamps that shine unconsumed. From the authour of 'Fitzosborne's Letters' I cannot think myself in much danger. I met him only once about thirty years ago, and in some small dispute reduced him to whistle. Having not seen him since, that is the last impression. Poor Moore, the fabulist, was one of the company.

"Mrs. Montagu's long stay, against her own inclination, is very convenient. You would, by your own confession, want a companion; and she is *par pluribus*. Conversing with her you may *find variety in one*.

["At Mrs. Ord's I met one Mrs. B———[1], a travelled lady, of great spirit, and some consciousness of her own abilities. We had a contest of gallantry an hour long, so much to the diversion of the company, that, at Ramsay's, last night, in a crowded room, they would have pitted us again. There were Smelt and the Bishop of St. Asaph, who comes to every place; and Lord Monboddo, and Sir Joshua, and ladies out of tale. Letters, vol. ii. p. 111.

"The exhibition, how will you do, either to see or not to see! The exhibition is eminently splendid. There is *contour*, and *keeping*, and *grace*, and *expression*, and all the varieties of artificial excellence. The apartments were truly very noble. The pictures, for the sake of a skylight, are at the top of the house: there we dined, and I sat over against the Archbishop of York."

"Bolt-court, Fleet-street, 7th May, 1780. p. 113.

"I dined on Wednesday with Mr. Fitzmaurice, who almost made me promise to pass part of the summer at Llewenny. To-morrow I dine with Mrs. Southwel; and on Thursday with Lord Lucan. To-night I go to Miss Monkton's[2]. Then I

[1] [The editor would have supposed this to have been Mrs. Boscawen, but that Johnson appears to have met this lady two years before. See *ante*, p. 191.—Ed.]

[2] [The Honourable Mary Monkton, daughter of the first Viscount Galway, married in 1786 to Edmund, 7th Earl of Corke and Orrery. Some peerages state her to have been born in April, 1747, and her ladyship still mixes in society with health and spirits very extraordinary at the age of eighty-three; but Lodge's "Peerage of Ireland" makes her still older, stating her birth to have been in *April*, 1737. The dates, even in the best peerages, are so liable to error, that the Editor would not have paid much attention to this one, but that he has found it corroborated by an announcement in the *Gentleman's Magazine for April*, 1737, that Lady Galway was delivered of a *daughter*, and it does not any where appear that there was any *other* daughter. If Lady Corke was the *only* daughter, there can be no doubt on the subject, for the statement in the Magazine, published at the very time, cannot be erroneous in point of date. —Ed.]

Letters, vol. ii. p. 113. scramble, when you do not quite shut me up: but I am miserably under petticoat government, and yet am not very weary, nor much ashamed."

p. 115. "Bolt-court, Fleet-street, 8th May, 1780.

"I dine on Thursday at Lord Lucan's, and on Saturday at Lady Craven's; and I dined yesterday with Mrs. Southwel.

"As to my looks at the Academy, I was not told of them; and as I remember, I was very well, and I am well enough now."

p. 116. "MRS. THRALE TO DR. JOHNSON.

"9th May, 1780.

"When did I ever plague you about *contour*, and *grace*, and *expression?* I have dreaded them all three since that hapless day at Compeigne, when you teased me so, and Mr. Thrale made what I hoped would have proved a lasting peace; but French ground is unfavourable to fidelity perhaps, and so now you begin again: after having taken five years' breath, you might have done more than this. Say another word, and I will bring up afresh the history of your exploits at St. Denys, and how cross you were for nothing—but somehow or other, our travels never make any part either of our conversation or correspondence. * * *

"Mr. Fitzmaurice is always civiller both to you and me than either of us deserve. I wonder (as the phrase is) what he sees in us? Not much politeness surely. * * *

"Shall we have some chat about the Lives now? that of Blackmore will be very entertaining, I dare say, and he will be rescued from the old wits who worried him, much to your disliking: so a little for love of his christianity, a little for love of his physick, a little for love of his courage, and a little for love of contradiction, you will save him from his malevolent criticks, and, perhaps, do him the honour to devour him yourself—as a lion is said to take a great bull now and then from the wolves which had fallen upon him in the desert, and gravely eat him up for his own dinner."

p. 125. "DR. JOHNSON TO MRS. THRALE.

"Bolt-court, Fleet-street, London, 9th May, 1780.

"My *Lives* creep on. I have done *Addison, Prior, Rowe, Granville, Sheffield, Collins, Pitt,* and almost *Fenton.* I design to take *Congreve* next into my hand. I hope to have done before you can come home, and then whither shall I go?

* * * * * *

"Did I tell you that Scot and Jones[1] both offer themselves to represent the university in the place of Sir Roger Newdigate? They are struggling hard for what others think neither of them will obtain."] Letters, vol. ii. p. 126.

On the 2d of May I wrote to him, and requested that we might have another meeting somewhere in the north of England in the autumn of this year.

From Mr. Langton I received soon after this time a letter, of which I extract a passage, relative both to Mr. Beauclerk and Dr. Johnson.

"The melancholy information you have received concerning Mr. Beauclerk's death is true. Had his talents been directed in any sufficient degree as they ought, I have always been strongly of opinion that they were calculated to make an illustrious figure; and that opinion, as it had been in part formed upon Dr. Johnson's judgment, receives more and more confirmation by hearing what, since his death, Dr. Johnson has said concerning them. A few evenings ago he was at Mr. Vesey's, where Lord Althorpe[2], who was one of a numerous company there, addressed Dr. Johnson on the subject of Mr. Beauclerk's death, saying, 'Our Club has had a great loss since we met last.' He replied, 'A loss that perhaps the whole nation could not repair!' The doctor then went on to speak of his endowments, and particularly extolled the wonderful ease with which he uttered what was highly excellent. He said, 'that no man ever was so free, when he was going to say a good thing, from a *look* that expressed that it was coming; or, when he had said it, from a look that expressed that it had come.' At Mr. Thrale's, some days before, when we Langton

[1] [Lord Stowell and Sir William Jones. Lord Stowell was elected for the University of Oxford in 1801, and represented it till his promotion to the peerage in 1821.—Ed.]

[2] [John-George, second Earl Spencer, who has been so kind as to answer some of the Editor's inquiries relative to the *society*, of which he and Lord Stowell are now almost the only survivors.—Ed.]

Langton were talking on the same subject, he said, referring to the same idea of his wonderful facility, 'That Beauclerk's talents were those which he had felt himself more disposed to envy, than those of any whom he had known.'

"On the evening I have spoken of above, at Mr. Vesey's, you would have been much gratified, as it exhibited an instance of the high importance in which Dr. Johnson's character is held, I think even beyond any I ever before was witness to. The company consisted chiefly of ladies; among whom were the Duchess Dowager of Portland[1], the Duchess of Beaufort, whom, I suppose from her rank, I must name before her mother, Mrs. Boscawen[2], and her eldest sister, Mrs. Lewson, who was likewise there; Lady Lucan[3], Lady Clermont[4], and others of note both for their station and understandings. Among other gentlemen were Lord Althorpe, whom I have before named, Lord Macartney, Sir Joshua Reynolds, Lord Lucan, Mr. Wraxal, whose book you have probably seen, 'The Tour to the Northern Parts of Europe,' a very agreeable, ingenious man, Dr. Warren, Mr. Pepys, the master in chancery, whom, I believe,

[1] [Lady Margaret Cavendish Harley, only child of the second Earl of Oxford and Mortimer; married in 1734 to the second Duke of Portland. She was the heiress of three great families: herself of the Harleys; her mother (the Lady Harriet of Prior) was the heiress of John Holles, Duke of Newcastle; and *her* mother again, the heiress of Henry Cavendish, Duke of Newcastle. "The Duchess of Portland inherited," says the Peerage, "the spirit of her ancestors in her patronage of literature and the arts." Her birth was congratulated by Swift, and her childhood celebrated by Prior in the well-known nursery lines beginning

"My noble, lovely, little Peggy."

The duchess died in 1785.—ED.]

[2] [See *ante*, p. 191. Mrs. Boscawen and her daughters, Mrs. Leveson Gower and the Duchess of Beaufort, are celebrated in Miss Hannah More's poem entitled "Sensibility," who, speaking of Mrs. Boscawen, says that she

"——— views, enamoured, in her beauteous race,
All Leveson's sweetness and all Beaufort's grace."—ED.]

[3] [Margaret Smith; married in 1760 the first Lord Lucan.—ED.]

[4] [Frances Murray; married in 1752 to the first Lord Clermont.—ED.]

you know, and Dr. Barnard, the provost of Eton [1]. Langton As soon as Dr. Johnson was come in, and *had taken the chair*, the company began to collect round him till they became not less than four, if not five deep; those behind standing, and listening over the heads of those that were sitting near him. The conversation for some time was chiefly between Dr. Johnson and the provost of Eton, while the others contributed occasionally their remarks. Without attempting to detail the particulars of the conversation, which, perhaps, if I did, I should spin my account out to a tedious length, I thought, my dear sir, this general account of the respect with which our valued friend was attended to might be acceptable."

[The formal style of the following letter [2], compared with that of his former correspondence with Mr. Thomas Warton, plainly proves that a coolness or misunderstanding had taken place between them. The reader will not have forgotten the ridicule with which Johnson had lately treated Warton's poems [3]. Ed.

"DR. JOHNSON TO MR. THOMAS WARTON. MS.

"Bolt-court, Fleet-street, 9th May, 1780.

"Sir,—I have your pardon to ask for an involuntary fault. In a parcel sent from Mr. Boswell I found the enclosed letter, which, without looking on the direction, I broke open; but, finding I did not understand it, soon saw it belonged to you. I am sorry for this appearance of a fault, but believe me it is only the appearance. I did not read enough of the letter to know its purport. I am, sir, your most humble servant,

"Sam. Johnson."

In Dr. Wooll's Memoirs of Dr. Warton we find Ed. the following statement: "The disagreement which

[1] [See, *ante*, p. 301, Johnson's own account of this evening. The gentle and good-natured Langton does not hint at his having *driven away* "the *very agreeable and ingenious* Mr. Wraxal."—Ed.]

[2] [From the MS. which has been communicated to the Editor.—Ed.]

[3] [*Ante*, p. 3.—Ed.]

Wooll's Life of Warton, p. 98. took place after a long and warm friendship between Johnson and [Joseph] Warton is much to be lamented: it occurred at the house of Sir Joshua Reynolds, as I am told by one of the company, who only overheard the following conclusion of the dispute: JOHNSON. 'Sir, I am not used to be contradicted.' WARTON. 'Better for yourself and friends, sir, if you were: our admiration could not be increased, but our love might.' The party interfered, and the conversation was stopped. A coolness, however, from that time took place, and was increased by many trifling circumstances, which, before this dispute, would, perhaps, have not been attended to." ED. The style, however, of the following letter to Dr. Warton, written so late in Dr. Johnson's life, leads us to hope that the difference recorded by Dr. Wooll was transient.

MS. "DR. JOHNSON TO DR. WARTON.

"23d May, 1780.

"DEAR SIR,—It is unnecessary to tell you how much I was obliged by your useful memorials. The shares of Fenton and Broome in the Odyssey I had before from Mr. Spence. Dr. Warburton did not know them. I wish to be told, as the question is of great importance in the poetical world, whence you had your intelligence: if from Spence, it shows at least his consistency; if from any other, it confers corroboration. If any thing useful to me should occur, I depend upon your friendship.

"Be pleased to make my compliments to the ladies of your house, and to the gentleman that honoured me with the Greek Epigrams, when I had, what I hope sometime to have again, the pleasure of spending a little time with you at Winchester. I am, dear sir, your most obliged and most humble servant,

"SAM. JOHNSON."]

Letters, vol. ii. p. 127. ["TO MRS. THRALE.

"23d May, 1780.

"But [Mrs. Montagu] and you have had, with all your adulation, nothing finer said of you than was said last Saturday

night of Burke and me. We were at the Bishop of — ———'s [1], (a bishop little better than *your* bishop), and towards twelve we fell into talk, to which the ladies listened, just as they do to you; and said, as I heard, *there is no rising unless somebody will cry Fire!* Letters, vol. ii. p. 127.

"I was last night at Miss Monkton's; and there were Lady Craven and Lady Cranburne, and many ladies and few men. Next Saturday I am to be at Mr. Pepys's, and in the intermediate time am to provide for myself as I can."

"25th May. p. 137.

"*Congreve*, whom I despatched at the Borough while I was attending the election, is one of the best of the little *Lives*; but then I had your conversation."]

"DR. JOHNSON TO THE REV. DR. FARMER.

"25th May, 1780.

"SIR,—I know your disposition to second any literary attempt, and therefore venture upon the liberty of entreating you to procure from college or university registers all the dates or other informations which they can supply relating to Ambrose Philips, Broome, and Gray, who were all of Cambridge, and of whose lives I am to give such accounts as I can gather. Be pleased to forgive this trouble from, sir, your most humble servant, "SAM. JOHNSON."

While Johnson was thus engaged in preparing a delightful literary entertainment for the world, the tranquillity of the metropolis of Great Britain was unexpectedly disturbed by the most horrid series of outrage that ever disgraced a civilized country. A relaxation of some of the severe penal provisions against our fellow-subjects of the Catholick communion had been granted by the legislature, with an opposition so inconsiderable, that the genuine mildness of christianity, united with liberal policy, seemed to have become general in this island. But a dark and malignant spirit of persecution soon showed itself, in an

[1] [The Bishop of St. Asaph's, of whose too constant appearance in general society Dr. Johnson disapproved.—ED.]

unworthy petition for the repeal of the wise and humane statute. That petition was brought forward by a mob, with the evident purpose of intimidation, and was justly rejected. But the attempt was accompanied and followed by such daring violence as is unexampled in history. Of this extraordinary tumult, Dr. Johnson has given the following concise, lively, and just account in his "Letters to Mrs. Thrale [1]:"

Letters, vol. ii. p. 143.

"9th June, 1780.

"On Friday [2], the good protestants met in Saint George's Fields, at the summons of Lord George Gordon; and marching to Westminster, insulted the lords and commons, who all bore it with great tameness. At night the outrages began by the demolition of the mass-house by Lincoln's Inn.

"An exact journal of a week's defiance of government I cannot give you. On Monday Mr. Strahan, who had been insulted, spoke to Lord Mansfield, who had I think been insulted too, of the licentiousness of the populace; and his lordship treated it as a very slight irregularity. On Tuesday night they pulled down Fielding's house [3], and burnt his goods in the street. They had gutted on Monday Sir George Savile's house, but the building was saved. On Tuesday evening, leaving Fielding's ruins, they went to Newgate to demand their companions, who had been seized demolishing the chapel. The keeper could not release them but by the mayor's permission, which he went to ask: at his return he found all the prisoners released, and Newgate in a blaze. They then went to Bloomsbury, and fastened upon Lord Mansfield's house, which they pulled down; and as for his goods, they totally burnt them. They have since gone to Caen-wood, but a guard was there before them. They plundered some papists, I think, and burnt a mass-house, in Moorfields, the same night.

"On Wednesday I walked with Dr. Scot [4] to look at Newgate, and found it in ruins, with the fire yet glowing. As I

[1] Vol. ii. p. 143, *et seq.* I have selected passages from several letters, without mentioning dates.—BOSWELL. [The Editor has restored the dates and remarkable omission.—ED.]

[2] June 2.—BOSWELL.

[3] This is not quite correct. Sir John Fielding was, I think, then dead. It was Justice Hyde's house, in St. Martin's-street, Leicester-fields, that was gutted, and his goods burnt in the street.—BLAKEWAY. [Sir John Fielding did not die till the following September, and his house was certainly attacked and plundered.—ED.]

[4] [Lord Stowell.—ED.]

went by, the protestants were plundering the sessions-house at the Old Bailey. There were not, I believe, a hundred; but they did their work at leisure, in full security, without sentinels, without trepidation, as men lawfully employed in full day. Such is the cowardice of a commercial place. On Wednesday they broke open the Fleet, and the King's Bench, and the Marshalsea, and Wood-street Compter, and Clerkenwell Bridewell, and released all the prisoners. Letters, vol. ii. p. 144.

"At night they set fire to the Fleet, and to the King's Bench, and I know not how many other places; and one might see the glare of conflagration fill the sky from many parts. The sight was dreadful. Some people were threatened: Mr. Strahan advised me to take care of myself. Such a time of terrour you have been happy in not seeing.

"The king said in council, 'That the magistrates had not done their duty, but that he would do his own;' and a proclamation was published, directing us to keep our servants within doors, as the peace was now to be preserved by force. The soldiers were sent out to different parts, and the town is now at quiet."

"What has happened at your house you will know; the harm is only a few butts of beer; and, I think, you may be sure that the danger is over. There is a body of soldiers at St. Margaret's Hill."

"10th June, 1780. p. 152.

"The soldiers are stationed so as to be every where within call. There is no longer any body of rioters, and the individuals are hunted to their holes, and led to prison. Lord George was last night sent to the Tower. Mr. John Wilkes was this day in my neighbourhood, to seize the publisher of a seditious paper.

"Several chapels have been destroyed, and several inoffensive papists have been plundered; but the high sport was to burn the gaols. This was a good rabble trick. The debtors and the criminals were all set at liberty; but of the criminals, as has always happened, many are already retaken; and two pirates have surrendered themselves, and it is expected that they will be pardoned.

"Government now acts again with its proper force; and we are all under the protection of the king and the law. I thought that it would be agreeable to you and my *master* to have my testimony to the public security; and that you would sleep more quietly when I told you that you are safe."

Letters, vol. ii. p. 154.

"12th June, 1780.

"The publick has escaped a very heavy calamity. The rioters attempted the Bank on Wednesday night, but in no great number; and like other thieves, with no great resolution. Jack Wilkes headed the party that drove them away. It is agreed, that if they had seized the Bank on Tuesday, at the height of the panick, when no resistance had been prepared, they might have carried irrecoverably away whatever they had found. Jack, *who was always zealous for order and decency* [1], declares, that if he be trusted with power, he will not leave a rioter alive. There is, however, now no longer any need of heroism or bloodshed; no blue riband [2] is any longer worn.

p. 156. ["All danger here is apparently over: but a little agitation still continues. We frighten one another with seventy thousand Scots [3] to come hither with the Dukes of Gordon and Argyll, and eat us, and hang us, or drown us; but we are all at quiet."]

p. 158.

"14th June, 1780.

"There has, indeed, been an universal panick, from which the king was the first that recovered. Without the concurrence of his ministers, or the assistance of the civil magistrates, he put the soldiers in motion, and saved the town from calamities, such as a rabble's government must naturally produce."

Such was the end of this miserable sedition, from which London was delivered by the magnanimity of the sovereign himself. Whatever some may maintain, I am satisfied that there was no combination or plan, either domestic or foreign; but that the mischief spread by a gradual contagion of frenzy, augmented by the quantities of fermented liquors of which the deluded populace possessed themselves in the course of their depredations.

I should think myself very much to blame, did I

[1] [At this ironical allusion to Mr. Wilkes's own proceedings in former times, he would have been the first to smile. To a gentleman who, at a still later period, was alluding to the turbulent days of *Wilkes and liberty*, and appealed for confirmation of some opinion to Mr. Wilkes, the latter, with a serious pleasantry, replied, "My dear sir, I never was a *Wilkite*."—ED.]

[2] Lord George Gordon and his followers, during these outrages, wore blue ribands in their hats.—MALONE.

[3] [Mr. Boswell had omitted this passage.—ED.]

here neglect to do justice to my esteemed friend [1] Mr. Akerman, the keeper of Newgate, who long discharged a very important trust with an uniform intrepid firmness, and at the same time a tenderness and a liberal charity which entitle him to be recorded with distinguished honour.

Upon this occasion, from the timidity and negligence of magistracy on the one hand, and the almost incredible exertions of the mob on the other, the first prison of this great country was laid open, and the prisoners set free; but that Mr. Akerman, whose house was burnt, would have prevented all this, had proper aid been sent him in due time, there can be no doubt.

Many years ago, a fire broke out in the brick part which was built as an addition to the old gaol of Newgate. The prisoners were in consternation and tumult, calling out, "We shall be burnt, we shall be burnt! Down with the gate!—down with the gate!" Mr. Akerman hastened to them, showed himself at the gate, and having, after some confused vociferation of "Hear him! hear him!" obtained a silent attention, he then calmly told them, that the gate must not go down; that they were under his care, and that they should not be permitted to escape; but that he could assure them they need not be afraid of being burnt, for that the fire was not in the prison, properly so called, which was strongly built with stone; and that if they would engage to be quiet, he himself would come in to them, and conduct them to the further end of the building, and would not go out till they gave him leave. To this proposal they agreed;

[1] [Why Mr. Boswell should call the keeper of Newgate his "*esteemed friend*" has puzzled many readers; but besides his natural desire to make the acquaintance of every body who was eminent or remarkable, or even *notorious*, his strange propensity for witnessing executions probably brought him into more immediate intercourse with the keeper of Newgate.—ED.]

upon which Mr. Akerman, having first made them fall back from the gate, went in, and with a determined resolution ordered the outer turnkey upon no account to open the gate, even though the prisoners (though he trusted they would not) should break their word, and by force bring himself to order it. "Never mind me," said he, "should that happen." The prisoners peaceably followed him, while he conducted them through passages of which he had the keys to the extremity of the gaol, which was most distant from the fire. Having by this very judicious conduct fully satisfied them that there was no immediate risk, if any at all, he then addressed them thus: "Gentlemen, you are now convinced that I told you true. I have no doubt that the engines will soon extinguish this fire: if they should not, a sufficient guard will come, and you shall be all taken out and lodged in the compters. I assure you, upon my word and honour, that I have not a farthing insured. I have left my house that I might take care of you. I will keep my promise, and stay with you if you insist upon it; but if you will allow me to go out and look after my family and property, I shall be obliged to you." Struck with his behaviour, they called out, "Master Akerman, you have done bravely; it was very kind in you: by all means go and take care of your own concerns." He did so accordingly, while they remained, and were all preserved.

Johnson has been heard to relate the substance of this story with high praise, in which he was joined by Mr. Burke. My illustrious friend, speaking of Mr. Akerman's kindness to his prisoners, pronounced this eulogy upon his character:—"He who has long had constantly in his view the worst of mankind, and is yet eminent for the humanity of his disposition, must have had it originally in a great degree, and continued to cultivate it very carefully."

["DR. JOHNSON TO MRS. THRALE. Letters, vol. ii. p. 161.

"London, 15th June, 1780.

"I was last week at *Renny's*[1] *conversatione*, and *Renny* got her room pretty well filled; and there were Mrs. Ord, and Mrs. Horneck, and Mrs. Bunbury[2], and other illustrious names, and much would poor *Renny* have given to have had Mrs. Thrale too, and Queeny, and Burney[3]; but human happiness is never perfect; there is always *une vuide affreuse*, as Maintenon complained, there is some craving void left aking in the breast. *Renny* is going to Ramsgate; and thus the world drops away, and I am left in the sultry town, to see the sun in the *Crab*, and perhaps in the *Lion*, while you are paddling with the Nereids[4]."

"London, 4th July, 1780. p. 165.

"I have not seen or done much since I had the misfortune of seeing you go away. I was one night at Burney's. There were Pepys, and Mrs. Ord, and Paradise[5], and Hoole, and Dr. Dunbar of Aberdeen, and I know not how many more; and Pepys and I had all the talk."]

["DR. JOHNSON TO MISS REYNOLDS. Reyn. MSS.

"Bolt-court, 16th June, 1780.

"DEAR MADAM,—I answer your letter as soon as I can, for I have just received it. I am very willing to wait on you at all times, and will sit for the picture, and, if it be necessary, will sit again, for whenever I sit I shall be always with you.

"Do not, my love, burn your papers. I have mended little but some bad rhymes[6]. I thought them very pretty, and was much moved in reading them. The red ink is only lake and gum, and with a moist sponge will be washed off.

"I have been out of order, but by bleeding and other means, am now better. Let me know on which day I shall come to you. I am, dear madam, your most humble servant,

"SAM. JOHNSON.

"To-day I am engaged, and only to-day."]

[1] [Miss Reynolds.—ED.]
[2] [See *ante*, vol. i. p. 423.—ED.]
[3] [Miss Fanny Burney, the author of Evelina, now Madame D'Arblay.—ED.]
[4] [Mrs. Thrale was at Brighton.—ED.]
[5] [See *ante*, vol. i. p. 34.—ED.]
[6] [Of a poem now (by the favour of Mr. Palmer) before the Editor. Johnson read it attentively, and made numerous corrections, but after all it is not worth much.—ED.]

Letters, vol. ii. p. 166.

"DR. JOHNSON TO MRS. THRALE.

"London, 10th July, 1780.

"Last week I saw flesh but twice, and I think fish once: the rest was pease.

"You are afraid, you say, lest I extenuate myself too fast, and are an enemy to violence: but did you never hear nor read, dear madam, that every man has his *genius;* and that the great rule by which all excellence is attained, and all success procured, is to follow *genius;* and have you not observed in all our conversation that my *genius* is always in extremes—that I am very noisy or very silent, very gloomy or very merry, very sour or very kind? And would you have me cross my *genius,* when it leads me sometimes to voracity, and sometimes to abstinence? You know that the oracle said, Follow your *genius.* When we get together again (but when, alas! will that be?) you can manage me, and spare me the solicitude of managing myself.

p. 168. "I stay at home to work, and yet do not work diligently; nor can tell when I shall have done, nor perhaps does any body but myself wish me to have done; for what can they hope I shall do better? Yet I wish the work was over, and I was at liberty. Would I go to Mrs. Aston and Mrs. Porter, and see the old places, and sigh to find that my old friends are gone? Would I recal plans of life which I never brought into practice, and hopes of excellence which I once presumed, and never have attained? Would I compare what I now am, with what I once expected to have been? Is it reasonable to wish for suggestions of shame, and opportunities of sorrow?"

p. 170.

"London, 27th July, 1780.

"I dined yesterday at Sir Joshua's with Mrs. Cholmondeley, and she told me I was the best critick in the world, and I told her that nobody in the world could judge like her of the merit of a critick.

"On Sunday I was with Dr. Lawrence and his two sisters-in-law, to dine with Mr. G——, at Putney. The doctor cannot hear in a coach better than in a room, and it was but a dull day."

p. 173.

"London, 1st August, 1780.

"I sent to Lord Westcote[1] about his brother's life; but he says he knows not whom to employ, and is sure I shall do him

[1] [Brother to the first Lord Lyttleton, by which title he was afterwards himself created an English peer. See *ante*, vol. iii. p. 156. *n.*—Ed.]

no injury. There is an ingenious scheme to save a day's work, or part of a day, utterly defeated. Then what avails it to be wise? The plain and the artful man must both do their own work. But I think I have got a life of Dr. Young[1]."]

In the course of this month my brother David[2] waited upon Dr. Johnson, with the following letter of introduction, which I had taken care should be lying ready on his arrival in London.

"TO DR. SAMUEL JOHNSON.

"Edinburgh, 29th April, 1780.

"MY DEAR SIR,—This will be delivered to you by my brother David on his return from Spain. You will be glad to see the man who vowed to 'stand by the old castle of Auchinleck with heart, purse, and sword;' that romantick family solemnity devised by me, of which you and I talked with complacency upon the spot. I trust that twelve years of absence have not lessened his feudal attachment, and that you will find him worthy of being introduced to your acquaintance. I have the honour to be, with affectionate veneration, my dear sir, your most faithful humble servant, "JAMES BOSWELL."

Johnson received him very politely, and has thus mentioned him in a letter to Mrs. Thrale[3]:

"21st June, 1780. Letters, vol. ii. p. 163.

"I have had with me a brother of Boswell's, a Spanish merchant, whom the war has driven from his residence at Valencia. He is gone to see his friends, and will find Scotland but a sorry place after twelve years' residence in a happier climate. He is a very agreeable man, and speaks no Scotch."

[Dr. Johnson had, for the last year, felt some alleviation of a troublesome disease which had long ED.

[1] [From Mr. (afterwards Sir) Herbert Croft. He died in 1805.—ED.]

[2] Now settled in London.—BOSWELL. [As Inspector of Seamen's Wills in the Navy Pay Office, from which situation he retired in 1823, and died in 1826, ætat. 76.—ED.]

[3] Mrs. Piozzi has omitted the name, *she best knows why*.—BOSWELL. [Mrs. Piozzi (acting with more delicacy, both to him and others, than Mr. Boswell himself showed), has almost every where omitted names: she feared, perhaps, that Mr. Boswell might not like to see his name coupled with the designation of Scotland as a "*sorry place*."—ED.]

Ep. affected him; this relief he thus gratefully and devoutly acknowledged:

Pr. and Med. p. 180. Sunday, June 18.—In the morning of this day last year, I perceived the remission of those convulsions in my breast which had distressed me for more than twenty years. I returned thanks at church for the mercy granted me, which has now continued a year.]

[" DR. JOHNSON TO MRS. THRALE.

Letters, vol. ii. p 177. " 14th August, 1780.

" I hope you have no design of stealing away to Italy before the election, nor of leaving me behind you; though I am not only *seventy* but *seventy-one*. Could not you let me lose a year in round numbers? Sweetly, sweetly, sings Dr. Swift,

'Some dire misfortune to portend,
No enemy can match a friend.'

But what if I am *seventy-two?* I remember Sulpitius says of Saint Martin—(now that's above *your* reading)—*Est animus victor annorum, et senectuti cedere nescius.* Match me that among your own folks. If you try to plague me, I shall tell you that, according to Galen, life begins to decline from *thirty-five*[1]."]

" TO DR. BEATTIE, AT ABERDEEN.

" Bolt-court, Fleet-street, 21st August, 1780.

" SIR,—More years[2] than I have any delight to reckon have past since you and I saw one another: of this, however, there is no reason for making any reprehensory complaint:—*Sic fata ferunt.* But methinks there might pass some small interchange of regard between us. If you say that I ought to have written, I now write: and I write to tell you, that I have much kindness for you and Mrs. Beattie; and that I wish your health better, and your life long. Try change of air, and come a few degrees southwards. A softer climate may do you both good. Winter is coming in; and London will be warmer, and gayer, and busier, and more fertile of amusement than Aberdeen.

" My health is better, but that will be little in the balance when I tell you that Mrs. Montagu has been very ill, and is, I

[1] [It may be surmised that Mrs. Thrale, at her last birth-day, was *thirty-five*: see *ante*, vol. iii. p. 463.—ED.]

[2] I had been five years absent from London.—BEATTIE.

doubt, now but weakly. Mr. Thrale has been very dangerously disordered; but is much better, and I hope will totally recover. He has withdrawn himself from business the whole summer. Sir Joshua and his sister are well; and Mr. Davies has got great success as an authour [1], generated by the corruption of a bookseller [2]. More news I have not to tell you, and therefore you must be contented with hearing, what I know not whether you much wish to hear [3], that I am, sir, your most humble servant, "SAM. JOHNSON."

"TO JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

"London, 21st August, 1780.

"DEAR SIR,—I find you have taken one of your fits of taciturnity, and have resolved not to write till you are written to: it is but a peevish humour, but you shall have your way.

"I have sat at home in Bolt-court all the summer, thinking to write the *Lives*, and a great part of the time only thinking. Several of them, however, are done, and I still think to do the rest.

"Mr. Thrale and his family have, since his illness, passed their time first at Bath, and then at Brighthelmstone; but I have been at neither place. I would have gone to Lichfield if I could have had time, and I might have had time if I had been active; but I have missed much, and done little.

"In the late disturbances, Mr. Thrale's house and stock were in great danger. The mob was pacified at their first invasion with about fifty pounds in drink and meat; and at their second, were driven away by the soldiers. Mr. Strahan got a garrison into his house, and maintained them a fortnight: he was so frighted, that he removed part of his goods. Mrs. Williams took shelter in the country.

"I know not whether I shall get a ramble this autumn. It is now about the time when we were travelling. I have, how-

[1] Meaning his entertaining "Memoirs of David Garrick, Esq." of which Johnson (as Davies informed me) wrote the first sentence; thus giving, as it were, the key-note to the performance. It is, indeed, very characteristical of its authour, beginning with a maxim, and proceeding to illustrate. "All excellence has a right to be recorded. I shall, therefore, think it superfluous to apologize for writing the life of a man, who, by an uncommon assemblage of private virtues, adorned the highest eminence in a publick profession."—BOSWELL.

[2] [What the expression "generated by the corruption of a bookseller" means seems not quite clear; perhaps it is an allusion to the generation of a class of insects, as if Davies, from his adversity as a bookseller, had burst into new and gaudier life as an author.—ED.]

[3] I wish he had omitted the suspicion expressed here, though I believe he meant nothing but jocularity; for, though he and I differed sometimes in opinion, he well knew how much I loved and revered him.—BEATTIE.

ever, better health than I had then, and hope you and I may yet show ourselves on some part of Europe, Asia, or Africa [1]. In the meantime let us play no trick, but keep each other's kindness by all means in our power.

"The bearer of this is Dr. Dunbar of Aberdeen, who has written and published a very ingenious book [2], and who I think has a kindness for me, and will, when he knows you, have a kindness for you.

"I suppose your little ladies are grown tall; and your son has become a learned young man. I love them all, and I love your naughty lady, whom I never shall persuade to love me. When the *Lives* are done, I shall send them to complete her collection, but must send them in paper, as, for want of a pattern, I cannot bind them to fit the rest. I am, sir, yours most affectionately, "SAM. JOHNSON."

Letters, vol. ii. p. 190.

["TO MRS. THRALE.

"London, 25th August, 1780.

"I have not dined out for some time but with *Renny* or Sir Joshua; and next week Sir Joshua goes to Devonshire, and *Renny* to Richmond, and I am left by myself. I wish I could say *nunquam minus* [3], &c., but I am not diligent.

"I am afraid that I shall not see Lichfield this year, yet it would please me to show my friends how much better I am grown: but I am not grown, I am afraid, less idle; and of idleness I am now paying the fine by having no leisure."]

This year he wrote to a young clergyman [4] in the country the following very excellent letter, which contains valuable advice to divines in general:

"Bolt-court, 30th August, 1780.

"DEAR SIR,—Not many days ago Dr. Lawrence showed me

[1] It will no doubt be remarked how he avoids the *rebellious* land of America. This puts me in mind of an anecdote, for which I am obliged to my worthy, social friend, Governour Richard Penn. "At one of Miss E. Hervey's assemblies, Dr. Johnson was following her up and down the room; upon which Lord Abington observed to her, 'Your great friend is very fond of you; you can go nowhere without him.' 'Ay,' said she, 'he would follow me to any part of the world.' 'Then,' said the earl, 'ask him to go with you to *America*.'"—BOSWELL. [This lady was Miss Elizabeth Hervey, daughter of William, brother of Johnson's two friends, Thomas and Henry Hervey. She was born in 1730, and died at a very advanced age, unmarried.—ED.]

[2] "Essays on the History of Mankind."—BOSWELL.

[3] ["Never less alone than when alone."—ED.]

[4] [Probably his friend, the Reverend George Strahan, who published his Prayers and Meditations.—ED.]

a letter, in which you make mention of me: I hope, therefore, you will not be displeased that I endeavour to preserve your goodwill by some observations which your letter suggested to me.

"You are afraid of falling into some improprieties in the daily service by reading to an audience that requires no exactness. Your fear, I hope, secures you from danger. They who contract absurd habits are such as have no fear. It is impossible to do the same thing very often without some peculiarity of manner: but that manner may be good or bad, and a little care will at least preserve it from being bad: to make it good, there must, I think, be something of natural or casual felicity, which cannot be taught.

"Your present method of making your sermons seems very judicious. Few frequent preachers can be supposed to have sermons more their own than yours will be. Take care to register, somewhere or other, the authours from whom your several discourses are borrowed; and do not imagine that you shall always remember, even what, perhaps, you now think it impossible to forget.

"My advice, however, is, that you attempt, from time to time, an original sermon; and, in the labour of composition, do not burden your mind with too much at once; do not exact from yourself at one effort of excogitation, propriety of thought and elegance of expression. Invent first, and then embellish. The production of something, where nothing was before, is an act of greater energy than the expansion or decoration of the thing produced. Set down diligently your thoughts as they rise in the first words that occur; and when you have matter you will easily give it form; nor, perhaps, will this method be always necessary; for, by habit, your thoughts and diction will flow together.

"The composition of sermons is not very difficult: the divisions not only help the memory of the hearer, but direct the judgment of the writer: they supply sources of invention, and keep every part in its proper place.

"What I like least in your letter is your account of the manners of your parish; from which I gather, that it has been long neglected by the parson. The Dean of Carlisle [1] who was then a little rector in Northamptonshire, told me, that it might be discerned whether or no there was a clergyman resident in a parish, by the civil or savage manner of the people. Such a

[1] Dr. Percy.—BOSWELL.

congregation as yours stands in need of much reformation: and I would not have you think it impossible to reform them. A very savage parish was civilized by a decayed gentlewoman, who came among them to teach a petty school. My learned friend, Dr. Wheeler, of Oxford, when he was a young man, had the care of a neighbouring parish for fifteen pounds a year, which he was never paid; but he counted it a convenience, that it compelled him to make a sermon weekly. One woman he could not bring to the communion; and when he reproved or exhorted her, she only answered, that she was no scholar. He was advised to set some good woman or man of the parish, a little wiser than herself, to talk to her in a language level to her mind. Such honest, I may call them holy, artifices must be practised by every clergyman; for all means must be tried by which souls may be saved. Talk to your people, however, as much as you can; and you will find, that the more frequently you converse with them upon religious subjects, the more willingly they will attend, and the more submissively they will learn. A clergyman's diligence always makes him venerable. I think I have now only to say, that, in the momentous work you have undertaken, I pray God to bless you. I am, sir, your most humble servant, "SAM. JOHNSON."

My next letters to him were dated 24th August, 6th September, and 1st October, and from them I extract the following passages:

"My brother David and I find the long indulged fancy of our comfortable meeting again at Auchinleck so well realised, that it in some degree confirms the pleasing hope of *O! preclarum diem!* in a future state.

"I beg that you may never again harbour a suspicion of my indulging a peevish humour, or playing tricks; you will recollect that when I confessed to you that I had once been intentionally silent to try your regard, I gave you my word and honour that I would not do so again.

"I rejoice to hear of your good state of health; I pray God to continue it long. I have often said that I would willingly have ten years added to my life, to have ten taken from yours; I mean, that I would be ten years older to have you ten years younger. But let me be thankful for the years during which I have enjoyed your friendship, and please myself with the hopes of enjoying it many years to come in this state of being,

trusting always, that in another state, we shall meet never to be separated. Of this we can form no notion; but the thought, though indistinct, is delightful, when the mind is calm and clear.

"The riots in London were certainly horrible; but you give me no account of your own situation during the barbarous anarchy. A description of it by Dr. Johnson would be a great painting[1]; you might write another 'London, a poem.'

"I am charmed with your condescending affectionate expression, 'let us keep each other's kindness by all the means in our power:' my revered friend! how elevating is it to my mind, that I am found worthy to be a companion to Dr. Samuel Johnson! All that you have said in grateful praise of Mr. Walmsley, I have long thought of you; but we are both Tories, which has a very general influence upon our sentiments. I hope that you will agree to meet me at York, about the end of this month; or if you will come to Carlisle, that would be better still, in case the dean be there. Please to consider, that to keep each other's kindness, we should every year have that free and intimate communication of mind which can be had only when we are together. We should have both our solemn and our pleasant talk.

"I write now for the third time, to tell you that my desire for our meeting this autumn is much increased. I wrote to 'Squire Godfrey Bosville, my Yorkshire *chief*, that I should, perhaps, pay him a visit, as I was to hold a conference with Dr. Johnson at York. I give you my word and honour that I said not a word of his inviting you; but he wrote to me as follows:

"'I need not tell you I shall be happy to see you here the latter end of this month, as you propose; and I shall likewise be in hopes that you will persuade Dr. Johnson to finish the conference here. It will add to the favour of your own company, if you prevail upon such an associate, to assist your observations. I have often been entertained with his writings, and I once belonged to a club of which he was a member, and I never spent an evening there, but I heard something from him well worth remembering.'

"We have thus, my dear sir, good comfortable quarters in the neighbourhood of York, where you may be assured we shall be heartily welcome. I pray you then resolve to set out; and let not the year 1780 be a blank in our social calendar, and

[1] I had not seen his letters to Mrs. Thrale.—BOSWELL.

in that record of wisdom and wit, which I keep with so much diligence, to your honour, and the instruction and delight of others."

Mr. Thrale had now another contest for the representation in parliament of the borough of Southwark, and Johnson kindly lent him his assistance, by writing advertisements and letters for him. I shall insert one as a specimen *:

"TO THE WORTHY ELECTORS OF THE BOROUGH OF SOUTHWARK.

"Southwark, 5th Sept. 1780.

"GENTLEMEN,—A new parliament being now called, I again solicit the honour of being elected for one of your representatives; and solicit it with the greater confidence, as I am not conscious of having neglected my duty, or of having acted otherwise than as becomes the independent representative of independent constituents; superiour to fear, hope, and expectation, who has no private purposes to promote, and whose prosperity is involved in the prosperity of his country. As my recovery from a very severe distemper is not yet perfect, I have declined to attend the hall, and hope an omission so necessary will not be harshly censured.

"I can only send my respectful wishes, that all your deliberations may tend to the happiness of the kingdom, and the peace of the borough. I am, gentlemen, your most faithful and obedient servant, "HENRY THRALE."

Piozzi, p. 165.

[Mrs. Piozzi exhibits Dr. Johnson in a new and unexpected character, as taking a personal part in one of Mr. Thrale's contests for the borough. "Dr. Johnson," she says, "knew how to be merry with mean people, as well as to be sad with them; he loved the lower ranks of humanity with a real affection: and though his talents and learning kept him always in the sphere of upper life, yet he never lost sight of the time when he and they shared pain and pleasure in common. A *Borough* election once showed me his toleration of boisterous mirth, and his

content in the company of people whom one would have thought at first sight little calculated for his society. A rough fellow one day on such an occasion, a hatter by trade, seeing Dr. Johnson's beaver in a state of decay, seized it suddenly with one hand, and clapping him on the back with the other: 'Ah, master Johnson,' says he, 'this is no time to be thinking about *hats*.' 'No, no, sir,' replies our doctor in a cheerful tone, 'hats are of no use now, as you say, except to throw up in the air and huzza with;' accompanying his words with the true election halloo."]

"TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE LADY SOUTHWELL[1], DUBLIN.

"Bolt-court, Fleet-street, London, 9th Sept. 1780.

"MADAM,—Among the numerous addresses of condolence which your great loss must have occasioned, be pleased to receive this from one whose name perhaps you have never heard, and to whom your ladyship is known only by the reputation of your virtue, and to whom your lord was known only by his kindness and beneficence.

"Your ladyship is now again summoned to exert that piety of which you once gave, in a state of pain and danger, so illustrious an example; and your lord's beneficence may be still continued by those, who with his fortune inherit his virtues.

"I hope to be forgiven the liberty which I shall take of informing your ladyship, that Mr. Mauritius Lowe, a son of your

[1] Margaret, the second daughter, and one of the co-heiresses of Arthur Cecil Hamilton, Esq. She was married in 1741 to Thomas George, the third Baron, and first Viscount, Southwell, and lived with him in the most perfect connubial felicity, till September 1780, when Lord Southwell died; a loss which she never ceased to lament to the hour of her own dissolution, in her eighty-first year, August 16, 1802. The "illustrious example of piety and fortitude" to which Dr. Johnson alludes was the submitting, when past her fiftieth year, to an extremely painful surgical operation, which she endured with extraordinary firmness and composure, not allowing herself to be tied to her chair, nor uttering a single moan. This slight tribute of affection to the memory of these two most amiable and excellent persons, who were not less distinguished by their piety, beneficence, and unbounded charity, than by a suavity of manners which endeared them to all who knew them, it is hoped, will be forgiven from one who was honoured by their kindness and friendship from his childhood.—MALONE.

late lord's father [1], had, by recommendation to your lord, a quarterly allowance of ten pounds, the last of which, due July 26, he has not received: he was in hourly hope of his remittance, and flattered himself that on October 26, he should have received the whole half-year's bounty, when he was struck with the dreadful news of his benefactor's death.

"May I presume to hope, that his want, his relation, and his merit, which excited his lordship's charity, will continue to have the same effect upon those whom he has left behind; and that, though he has lost one friend, he may not yet be destitute. Your ladyship's charity cannot easily be exerted where it is wanted more; and to a mind like yours, distress is a sufficient recommendation. I hope to be allowed the honour of being, madam, your ladyship's most humble servant,

"SAM. JOHNSON."

ED. [Amongst Mr. Lowe's papers was found, in Dr. Johnson's handwriting, the following draft of a letter which, no doubt, Johnson had sketched for his poor friend, and which was probably addressed to the new Lord Southwell [2]:

MS. "MY LORD,—The allowance which you are pleased to make me, I received on the ———— by Mr. Puget. Of the joy which it brought your lordship cannot judge, because you cannot imagine my distress. It was long since I had known a morning without solicitude for noon, or lain down at night without foreseeing, with terror, the distresses of the morning.

[1] Thomas, the second Lord Southwell, who was born Jan. 7, 1698-9, and died in London, Nov. 18, 1766. Johnson was well acquainted with this nobleman, and said, "he was the highest bred man, without insolence, that he was ever in company with." His younger brother, Edmund Southwell, lived in intimacy with Johnson for many years. See an account of him in "Hawkins's Life of Johnson," p. 405. He died in London, Nov. 22, 1772. In opposition to the knight's unfavourable representation of this gentleman, to whom I was indebted for my first introduction to Johnson, I take this opportunity to add, that he appeared to me a pious man, and was very fond of leading the conversation to religious subjects.—MALONE. [Sir J. Hawkins's account is not otherwise "unfavourable" than in representing him to have been reduced to a state of poverty so abject as to be almost incredible; and the editor would have been satisfied that Hawkins had been under some mistake about this matter, had not Mr. Malone (disposed as he was to censure Hawkins, and to uphold Southwell) appeared in the foregoing note to acquiesce in *that part* of Hawkins's statement.—ED.]

[2] [Communicated to the Editor by Mr. Markland.—ED.]

My debts were small, but many; my creditors were poor, and therefore troublesome. Of this misery your lordship's bounty has given me an intermission. May your lordship live long to do much good, and to do for many what you have done for, my lord, your lordship's, &c. "M. Lowe."]

On his birthday, Johnson has this note:

"I am now beginning the seventy-second year of my life, with more strength of body and greater vigour of mind than I think is common at that age."

But still he complains of sleepless nights and idle days, and forgetfulness, or neglect of resolutions. He thus pathetically expresses himself:

"Surely I shall not spend my whole life with my own total disapprobation." Pr. and Med. p. 185.

Mr. Macbean, whom I have mentioned more than once, as one of Johnson's humble friends, a deserving but unfortunate man, being now oppressed by age and poverty, Johnson solicited the Lord Chancellor Thurlow to have him admitted into the Charter-house. I take the liberty to insert his lordship's answer, as I am eager to embrace every occasion of augmenting the respectable notion which should ever be entertained of my illustrious friend:

"TO DR. SAMUEL JOHNSON.

"London, 24th October, 1780.

"Sir,—I have this moment received your letter dated the 19th, and returned from Bath.

"In the beginning of the summer I placed one in the Chartreux, without the sanction of a recommendation so distinct and so authoritative as yours of Macbean; and I am afraid, that according to the establishment of the house, the opportunity of making the charity so good amends will not soon recur. But whenever a vacancy shall happen, if you'll favour me with notice of it, I will try to recommend him to the place, even though it should not be my turn to nominate. I am, sir, with great regard, your most faithful and obedient servant,

"Thurlow."

Malone. Mr. Macbean was, however, on Lord Thurlow's nomination, admitted into the Chartreux in April, 1781; on which occasion Dr. Johnson, with that benevolence by which he was uniformly actuated, wrote the following letter, which, for the sake of connexion, may properly be introduced here:

"TO THE REVEREND DR. VYSE, AT LAMBETH.

"Bolt-court, Fleet-street, 10th April, 1781.

"REV. SIR,—The bearer is one of my old friends, a man of great learning, whom the chancellor has been pleased to nominate to the Chartreux. He attends his grace the archbishop, to take the oath required; and being a modest scholar, will escape embarrassment, if you are so kind as to introduce him, by which you will do a kindness to a man of great merit, and add another to those favours, which have already been conferred by you on, sir, your most humble servant, "SAM. JOHNSON."

"TO JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

"17th Oct. 1780.

"DEAR SIR,—I am sorry to write you a letter that will not please you, and yet it is at last what I resolve to do. This year must pass without an interview; the summer has been foolishly lost, like many other of my summers and winters. I hardly saw a green field, but staid in town to work, without working much.

"Mr. Thrale's loss of health has lost him the election[1]; he is now going to Brighthelmstone, and expects me to go with him; and how long I shall stay, I cannot tell. I do not much like the place, but yet I shall go and stay while my stay is desired. We must, therefore, content ourselves with knowing what we know as well as man can know the mind of man, that we love one another, and that we wish each other's happiness, and that the lapse of a year cannot lessen our mutual kindness.

"I was pleased to be told that I accused Mrs. Boswell unjustly, in supposing that she bears me ill-will. I love you so much, that I would be glad to love all that love you, and that

[1] ["Mrs. Thrale felt this very acutely. When, after Mr. Thrale's death, a friend of Mr. Henry Thornton, then a candidate for Southwark, canvassed Mrs. Thrale for her interest, she replied, "I wish your friend success, and think he will have it;—he may probably come in for two parliaments, but if he tries for a third, were he an angel from heaven, the people of Southwark would cry, 'Not this man, but Barabbas.'"—*Miss Hawkins's Mem* vol. i. p. 66.—ED.]

you love; and I have love very ready for Mrs. Boswell, if she thinks it worthy of acceptance. I hope all the young ladies and gentlemen are well.

"I take a great liking to your brother. He tells me that his father received him kindly, but not fondly: however, you seem to have lived well enough at Auchinleck, while you staid. Make your father as happy as you can.

"You lately told me of your health: I can tell you in return, that my health has been for more than a year past better than it has been for many years before. Perhaps it may please God to give us some time together before we are parted. I am, dear sir, yours, most affectionately, "SAM. JOHNSON."

"TO THE REVEREND DR. VYSE, AT LAMBETH.

"30th Dec. 1780.

"SIR,—I hope you will forgive the liberty I take, in soliciting your interposition with his grace the archbishop: my first petition was successful, and I therefore venture on a second.

"The matron of the Chartreux is about to resign her place, and Mrs. Desmoulins, a daughter of the late Dr. Swinfen [1], who was well known to your father, is desirous of succeeding her. She has been accustomed by keeping a boarding-school to the care of children, and I think is very likely to discharge her duty. She is in great distress, and therefore may properly receive the benefit of a charitable foundation. If you wish to see her, she will be willing to give an account of herself.

"If you shall be pleased, sir, to mention her favourably to his grace, you will do a great act of kindness to, sir, your most obliged and most humble servant, "SAM. JOHNSON."

Being disappointed in my hopes of meeting Johnson this year, so that I could hear none of his admirable sayings, I shall compensate for this want by inserting a collection of them, for which I am indebted to my worthy friend Mr. Langton, whose kind communications have been separately interwoven in many parts of this work. Very few articles of this collection were committed to writing by himself, he not having that habit; which he regrets, and which those

[1] See vol. i p. 52.—MALONE.

who know the numerous opportunities he had of gathering the rich fruits of *Johnsonian* wit and wisdom, must ever regret. I however found, in conversation with him, that a good store of JOHNSONIANA was treasured in his mind; and I compared it to Herculaneum, or some old Roman field, which, when dug, fully rewards the labourer employed. The authenticity of every article is unquestionable. For the expression, I, who wrote them down in his presence, am partly answerable.

Langton "Theocritus is not deserving of very high respect as a writer; as to the pastoral part, Virgil is very evidently superiour. He wrote, when there had been a larger influx of knowledge into the world than when Theocritus lived. Theocritus does not abound in description, though living in a beautiful country: the manners painted are coarse and gross. Virgil has much more description, more sentiment, more of nature, and more of art. Some of the most excellent parts of Theocritus are, where Castor and Pollux, going with the other Argonauts, land on the Bebrycian coast, and there fall into a dispute with Amycus, the king of that country: which is as well conducted as Euripides could have done it; and the battle is well related. Afterwards they carry off a woman, whose two brothers come to recover her, and expostulate with Castor and Pollux on their injustice; but they pay no regard to the brothers, and a battle ensues, where Castor and his brother are triumphant. Theocritus seems not to have seen that the brothers have their advantage in their argument over his Argonaut heroes. 'The Sicilian Gossips' is a piece of merit.

"Callimachus is a writer of little excellence. The chief thing to be learned from him is his account of Rites and Mythology; which, though desirable to be

known for the sake of understanding other parts of ancient authours, is the least pleasing or valuable part of their writings. Langton

"Mattaire's account of the Stephani is a heavy book. He seems to have been a puzzle-headed man, with a large share of scholarship, but with little geometry or logick in his head, without method, and possessed of little genius. He wrote Latin verses from time to time, and published a set in his old age, which he called '*Senilia*;' in which he shows so little learning or taste in writing, as to make *Carteret* a dactyl[1]. In matters of genealogy it is necessary to give the bare names as they are; but in poetry, and in prose of any elegance in the writing, they require to have inflection given to them. His book of the Dialects is a sad heap of confusion; the only way to write on them is to tabulate them with notes, added at the bottom of the page, and references.

"It may be questioned, whether there is not some mistake as to the methods of employing the poor, seemingly on a supposition that there is a certain portion of work left undone for want of persons to do it; but if that is otherwise, and all the materials we have are actually worked up, or all the manufactures we can use or dispose of are already executed, then what is given to the poor, who are to be set at work, must be taken from some who now have it: as time must be taken for learning (according to Sir William Petty's observation), a certain part of those very materials that, as it is, are properly worked up, must be spoiled by the unskilfulness of novices. We may apply to well-meaning, but misjudging persons in particulars of this nature, what Giannone said to a monk, who wanted what he called to *convert* him:

[1] [The Editor does not understand this objection, nor the following observation.—Ed.]

Langton '*Tu sei santo, ma tu non sei filosopho.*' It is an unhappy circumstance that one might give away five hundred pounds a year to those that importune in the streets, and not do any good.

"There is nothing more likely to betray a man into absurdity than *condescension*, when he seems to suppose his understanding too powerful for his company.

"Having asked Mr. Langton if his father and mother had sat for their pictures, which he thought it right for each generation of a family to do, and being told they had opposed it, he said, 'Sir, among the anfractuosities of the human mind, I know not if it may not be one, that there is a superstitious reluctance to sit for a picture.'

"John Gilbert Cooper related, that soon after the publication of his Dictionary, Garrick being asked by Johnson what people said of it, told him, that among other animadversions, it was objected that he cited authorities which were beneath the dignity of such a work, and mentioned Richardson. 'Nay,' said Johnson, 'I have done worse than that: I have cited *thee*, David.'

"Talking of expense, he observed, with what munificence a great merchant will spend his money, both from his having it at command, and from his enlarged views by calculation of a good effect upon the whole. 'Whereas,' said he, 'you will hardly ever find a country gentleman, who is not a good deal disconcerted at an unexpected occasion for his being obliged to lay out ten pounds.'

"When in good humour, he would talk of his own writings with a wonderful frankness and candour, and would even criticise them with the closest severity. One day, having read over one of his Ramblers, Mr. Langton asked him, how he liked that

paper; he shook his head, and answered, 'too wordy.' Langton
At another time, when one was reading his tragedy of 'Irene,' to a company at a house in the country, he left the room: and somebody having asked him the reason of this, he replied, 'Sir, I thought it had been better.'

"Talking of a point of delicate scrupulosity of moral conduct, he said to Mr. Langton, 'Men of harder minds than ours will do many things from which you and I would shrink; yet, sir, they will, perhaps, do more good in life than we. But let us try to help one another. If there be a wrong twist, it may be set right. It is not probable that two people can be wrong the same way.'

"Of the preface to Capel's Shakspeare, he said, 'If the man would have come to me, I would have endeavoured to "endow his purposes with words;" for as it is, he doth "gabble monstrously[1]."'

"He related that he had once in a dream a contest of wit with some other person, and that he was very much mortified by imagining that his opponent had the better of him. 'Now,' said he, 'one may mark here the effect of sleep in weakening the power of reflection; for had not my judgment failed me, I should have seen, that the wit of this supposed antagonist, by whose superiority I felt myself depressed, was as much furnished by me, as that which I thought I had been uttering in my own character.'

"One evening in company, an ingenious and learned gentleman read to him a letter of compliment which he had received from one of the professors of a foreign university. Johnson, in an irritable fit, thinking there was too much ostentation, said, 'I never receive any

[1] [*Prospero* to *Caliban*. "When thou wouldst gabble like a thing most brutish, I endowed thy purposes with words." *Tempest*, act i. scene 2.—Ed.]

Langton of these tributes of applause from abroad. One instance I recollect of a foreign publication, in which mention is made of *l'illustre Lockman*[1].'

"Of Sir Joshua Reynolds, he said, 'Sir, I know no man who has passed through life with more observation than Reynolds.'

"He repeated to Mr. Langton, with great energy, in the Greek, our Saviour's gracious expression concerning the forgiveness of Mary Magdalene[2], Ἡ πιστίς σου σέσωκέ σε· πορεύου εἰς εἰρήνην. 'Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace[3].' He said, 'The manner of this dismission is exceedingly affecting.'

"He thus defined the difference between physical and moral truth: 'Physical truth is, when you tell a thing as it actually is. Moral truth is, when you tell a thing sincerely and precisely as it appears to you. I say such a one walked across the street; if he really did so, I told a physical truth. If I thought so, though I should have been mistaken, I told a moral truth[4].'

"Huggins[5], the translator of Ariosto, and Mr. Thomas Warton, in the early part of his literary life, had a dispute concerning that poet, of whom Mr. Warton, in his 'Observations on Spenser's Fairy Queen,' gave some account which Huggins attempted

[1] Secretary to the British Herring Fishery, remarkable for an extraordinary number of occasional verses, not of eminent merit.—Boswell. [He was an indefatigable translator for the booksellers, "having acquired a knowledge of the languages, as Dr. Johnson told Sir J. Hawkins, by living at coffee-houses frequented by foreigners." Mr. Tyers says, "that Lockman was a very worthy man, greatly beloved by his friends, and respected even by Pope;" and he adds, "that it is a pity that he who composed so many of the lives in the 'General Dictionary' should himself not have one in the Biographia."—*Rhapsody on Pope*, p. 104.—Ed.]

[2] It does not appear that the woman forgiven was Mary Magdalene.—Kearney. [In the heading of this chapter, Luke vii. it is said, "he showeth by occasion of Mary Magdalene:" but it would rather appear by the following chapter, verse 2, that she is *not* the person here mentioned.—Hall.]

[3] Luke vii. 50.—Boswell.

[4] This account of the difference between moral and physical truth is in Locke's "Essay on Human Understanding," and many other books.—Kearney.

[5] [See *ante*, vol. I. 371.—Ed.]

to answer with violence, and said, 'I will *militate* no longer against his *nescience*.' Huggins was master of the subject, but wanted expression. Mr. Warton's knowledge of it was then imperfect, but his manner lively and elegant. Johnson said, 'It appears to me, that Huggins has ball without powder, and Warton powder without ball.' Langton

"Talking of the farce of 'High Life below Stairs,' he said, 'Here is a farce which is really very diverting when you see it acted, and yet one may read it and not know that one has been reading any thing at all.'

"He used at one time to go occasionally to the green-room of Drury-lane theatre, where he was much regarded by the players, and was very easy and facetious with them. He had a very high opinion of Mrs. Clive's comick powers, and conversed more with her than with any of them. He said, 'Clive, sir, is a good thing to sit by; she always understands what you say.' And she said of him, 'I love to sit by Dr. Johnson; he always entertains me.' One night, when 'The Recruiting Officer' was acted, he said to Mr. Holland, who had been expressing an apprehension that Dr. Johnson would disdain the works of Farquhar, 'No, sir, I think Farquhar a man whose writings have considerable merit.'

"His friend Garrick was so busy in conducting the drama, that they could not have so much intercourse as Mr. Garrick used to profess an anxious wish that there should be[1]. There might indeed be something in the contemptuous severity as to the merit of acting, which his old preceptor nourished in himself, that would mortify Garrick after the great applause which he received from the audience. For though Johnson

[1] In a letter written by Johnson to a friend in Jan. 1712-3, he says, "I never see Garrick."—MALONE.

Langton said of him, 'Sir, a man who has a nation to admire him every night may well be expected to be somewhat elated;' yet he would treat theatrical matters with a ludicrous slight. He mentioned one evening, 'I met David coming off the stage, drest in a woman's riding-hood, when he acted in The Wonder; I came full upon him, and I believe he was not pleased.'

"Once he asked Tom Davies, whom he saw drest in a fine suit of clothes, 'And what art thou to-night?' Tom answered, 'The Thane of Ross;' which it will be recollected is a very inconsiderable character. 'O, brave!' said Johnson.

"Of Mr. Longley[1], at Rochester, a gentleman of very considerable learning, whom Dr. Johnson met there, he said, 'My heart warms towards him. I was surprised to find in him such a nice acquaintance with the metre in the learned languages; though I was somewhat mortified that I had it not so much to myself as I should have thought.'

"Talking of the minuteness with which people will record the sayings of eminent persons, a story was told, that when Pope was on a visit to Spence at Oxford, as they looked from the window they saw a gentleman commoner, who was just come in from riding, amusing himself with whipping at a post. Pope took occasion to say, 'That young gentleman seems to have little to do.' Mr. Beauclerk observed, 'Then to be sure, Spence turned round and wrote that down;' and went on to say to Dr. Johnson, 'Pope, sir, would have said the same of you, if he had seen you distilling.' JOHNSON. 'Sir, if Pope had told me of my distilling, I would have told him of his grotto[2].'

[1] [A barrister; Recorder of rochester, father of the editor's amiable friend, the present master of Harrow. He died in 1822.—ED.]

[2] [This would have been a very inadequate retort, for Johnson's chemistry was a mere pastime, while Pope's grotto was, although ornamented, a useful,

"He would allow no settled indulgence of idleness upon principle, and always repelled every attempt to urge excuses for it. A friend one day suggested, that it was not wholesome to study soon after dinner. JOHNSON. 'Ah, sir, don't give way to such a fancy. At one time of my life I had taken it into my head that it was not wholesome to study between breakfast and dinner.' Langton

"Mr. Beauclerk one day repeated to Dr. Johnson Pope's lines,

'Let modest Foster, if he will, excel
Ten metropolitans in preaching well;' Epist. to Sat. v. 131.

Then asked the doctor, 'Why did Pope say this?' JOHNSON. 'Sir, he hoped it would vex somebody[1].'

"Dr. Goldsmith, upon occasion of Mrs. Lennox's bringing out a play[2], said to Dr. Johnson at the Club, that a person had advised him to go and hiss it, because she had attacked Shakspeare in her book called 'Shakspeare Illustrated.' JOHNSON. 'And did not you tell him that he was a rascal?' GOLDSMITH. 'No, sir, I did not. Perhaps he might not mean what he said.' JOHNSON. 'Nay, sir, if he lied, it is a different thing.' Colman slily said (but it is

and even necessary work. Johnson has explained his views of this point very copiously in his life of Pope; where he says, "that being under the necessity of making a subterraneous passage to a garden on the other side of the road, Pope adorned it with fossil bodies, and dignified it with the title of a grotto—a place of silence and retreat from which he endeavoured to persuade his friends and himself that care and passions could be excluded. A grotto is not often the wish or pleasure of an Englishman, who has more frequent need to solicit than to exclude the sun; but Pope's excavation was requisite as an entrance to his garden; and as some men try to be proud of their defects, he extracted an ornament from an inconvenience, and vanity produced a grotto where necessity enforced a passage." This (—and a good deal more of the same tone follows—) is surely treating a trifling circumstance with more pomp and verbosity than the occasion required.—ED.]

[1] Dr. James Foster was an eminent preacher among the dissenters; and Pope professes to prefer his merit in so humble a station to the more splendid ministry of the *metropolitans*. Pope's object certainly was to vex the clergy; but Mr. Beauclerk probably meant to ask—what is by no means so clear—how these two lines bear on the general design and argument.—ED.]

[2] Probably "The Sisters," a comedy performed one night only, at Covent Garden, in 1769. Dr. Goldsmith wrote an excellent epilogue to it.—MALONE.

Langton believed Dr. Johnson did not hear him), 'Then the proper expression should have been,—Sir, if you don't lie, you're a rascal.'

"His affection for Topham Beauclerk was so great, that when Beauclerk was labouring under that severe illness which at last occasioned his death, Johnson said (with a voice faltering with emotion), 'Sir, I would walk to the extent of the diameter of the earth to save Beauclerk.'

"One night at the Club he produced a translation of an epitaph which Lord Elibank had written in English for his lady, and requested of Johnson to turn it into Latin for him. Having read *Domina de North et Gray*[1], he said to Dyer[2], 'You see, sir, what barbarisms we are compelled to make use of, when modern titles are to be specifically mentioned in Latin inscriptions.' When he had read it once aloud, and there had been a general approbation expressed by the company, he addressed himself to Mr. Dyer in particular, and said, 'Sir, I beg to have your judgment, for I know your nicety.' Dyer then very properly desired to read it over again; which having done, he pointed out an incongruity in one of the sentences. Johnson immediately assented to the observation, and said, 'Sir, this is owing to an alteration of a part of the sentence from the form in which I had first written it; and I believe, sir, you may have remarked, that the making a partial change, without a due regard to the general structure of the sentence, is a very frequent cause of errour in composition[3].'

[1] [Lord Elibank married a Dutch lady, Maria Margaret de Yonge, the widow of Lord North and Gray. Mr. Langton mistook the phrase, which is, in the epitaph, applied to the husband, *Domino North et Gray*, and not to the lady, *Domina de North et Gray*; see "Douglas's Peerage," art. Elibank; where, however, there is no mention of the inscription having been translated into Latin by Johnson.—ED.]

[2] See *ante*, vol. ii. p. 4.—MALONE.

[3] [See *post*, a similar observation quoted in reference to Johnson's alterations in the "Lives of the Poets."—ED.]

[The endowments of Dyer were of a most valuable kind: keen penetration and deep erudition were the qualities that so distinguished his character, that, in some instances, Johnson might almost be said to have looked up to him. Dyer was a divine, a linguist, a mathematician, a metaphysician, a natural philosopher, a classical scholar, and a critic: this Johnson saw and felt, and never, but in defence of some fundamental and important truth, would he contradict him.] Hawk. p. 252.

"Johnson was well acquainted with Mr. Dossie, author of a Treatise on Agriculture[1]; and said of him, 'Sir, of the objects which the Society of Arts have chiefly in view, the chymical effects of bodies operating upon other bodies, he knows more than almost any man.' Johnson, in order to give Mr. Dossie his vote to be a member of this society, paid up an arrear which had run on for two years. On this occasion he mentioned a circumstance, as characteristick of the Scotch. 'One of that nation,' said he, 'who had been a candidate, against whom I had voted, came up to me with a civil salutation. Now, sir, this is their way. An Englishman would have stomached it and been sulky, and never have taken further notice of you; but a Scotchman, sir, though you vote nineteen times against him, will accost you with equal complaisance after each time, and the twentieth time, sir, he will get your vote.' Langton

"Talking on the subject of toleration, one day when some friends were with him in his study, he made his usual remark, that the state has a right to regulate the religion of the people, who are the children of the state. A clergyman having readily ac-

[1] [Dossie also published, in two vols. 8vo., what was then a very useful work, entitled "The Handmaid to the Arts," dedicated to the Society for the Encouragement of Arts, &c.—HALL.]

Langton quiesced in this, Johnson, who loved discussion, observed, 'But, sir, you must go round to other states than our own. You do not know what a Bramin has to say for himself[1]. In short, sir, I have got no further than this: every man has a right to utter what he thinks truth, and every other man has a right to knock him down for it. Martyrdom is the test.'

"A man, he observed, should begin to write soon; for, if he waits till his judgment is matured, his inability, through want of practice to express his conceptions, will make the disproportion so great between what he sees, and what he can attain, that he will probably be discouraged from writing at all. As a proof of the justness of this remark, we may instance what is related of the great Lord Granville[2]; that after he had written his letter giving an account of the battle of Dettingen, he said, 'Here is a letter, expressed in terms not good enough for a tallow-chandler to have used.'

"Talking of a court-martial that was sitting upon a very momentous publick occasion, he expressed much doubt of an enlightened decision; and said, that perhaps there was not a member of it, who, in the whole course of his life, had ever spent an hour by himself in balancing probabilities[3].

"Goldsmith one day brought to the Club a printed ode, which he, with others, had been hearing read by its author in a publick room, at the rate of five shillings each for admission. One of the company

[1] Here Lord Macartney remarks, "A Bramin, or any cast of the Hindoos, will neither admit you to be of their religion, nor be converted to yours:—a thing which struck the Portuguese with the greatest astonishment when they first discovered the East Indies."—Boswell.

[2] John, the first Earl Granville, who died Jan. 2, 1763.—Malone.

[3] [As Mr. Langton's anecdotes are not dated, it is not easy to determine what court-martial this was; probably—as Sir James Mackintosh suggests—Admiral Keppel's, in 1780.—Ed.]

having read it aloud, Dr. Johnson said, 'Bolder words and more timorous meaning, I think, never were brought together.' Langton

"Talking of Gray's Odes, he said, 'They are forced plants, raised in a hotbed; and they are poor plants: they are but cucumbers after all.' A gentleman present, who had been running down ode-writing in general, as a bad species of poetry, unluckily said, 'Had they been literally cucumbers, they had been better things than odes.' 'Yes, sir,' said Johnson, '*for a hog*.'

[At Sir Robert Cotton's, at Lleweny, one day at dinner, Mrs. Thrale meaning to please Dr. Johnson particularly with a dish of very young peas, said, while he was eating them, "Are not they charming?" "Perhaps," replied he, "they would be so—to a *pig*[1]." Piozzi, p. 48.

The Lincolnshire lady[2], who showed him a grotto she had been making, came off no better. "Would it not be a pretty cool habitation in summer," said she, "Dr. Johnson?" "I think it would, madam," replied he, "for a toad."] p. 157.

"His distinction of the different degrees of attainment of learning was thus marked upon two occasions. Of Queen Elizabeth he said, 'She had learning enough to have given dignity to a bishop;' and of Mr. Thomas Davies he said, 'Sir, Davies has learning enough to give credit to a clergyman.' Langton

"He used to quote, with great warmth, the saying of Aristotle recorded by Diogenes Laertius; that

[1] [See *ante*, vol. iii. p. 143. It should be observed that this answer was not, as is often erroneously stated, made to the lady of the house, but was a reproach (too rude, it must be admitted) to Mrs. Thrale for her rudeness in supposing him so great a glutton as to be *charmed* with a dish of green peas.—Ed.]

[2] [Mrs. Langton, mother of his friend.—*Malone MS. notes.* This was not meant as rudeness to the lady; but Johnson hated grottos, and thought, as he has said in his *Life* of Pope, that they were "not often the wish or pleasure of an Englishman, who has more frequent need to solicit than to exclude the sun." *Ante*, p. 341 *n.*—Ed.]

Langton there was the same difference between one learned and unlearned, as between the living and the dead.

"It is very remarkable, that he retained in his memory very slight and trivial, as well as important, things. As an instance of this, it seems that an inferiour domestick of the Duke of Leeds had attempted to celebrate his grace's marriage in such homely rhymes as he could make; and this curious composition having been sung to Dr. Johnson, he got it by heart, and used to repeat it in a very pleasant manner. Two of the stanzas were these:

'When the Duke of Leeds shall married be
To a fine young lady of high quality,
How happy will that gentlewoman be
In his Grace of Leeds's good company!

'She shall have all that 's fine and fair,
And the best of silk and satin shall wear;
And ride in a coach to take the air,
And have a house in St. James's-square[1].'

To hear a man of the weight and dignity of Johnson repeating such humble attempts at poetry had a very amusing effect. He, however, seriously observed of

[1] The correspondent of the Gentleman's Magazine who subscribes himself Sciolus furnishes the following supplement: "A lady of my acquaintance remembers to have heard her uncle sing those homely stanzas more than forty-five years ago. He repeated the second thus:

'She shall breed young lords and ladies fair,
And ride abroad in a coach and three pair,
And the best, &c.
And have a house,' &c.

and remembered a third, which seems to have been the introductory one, and is believed to have been the only remaining one:

'When the Duke of Leeds shall have made his choice
Of a charming young lady that 's beautiful and wise,
She 'll be the happiest young gentlewoman under the skies,
As long as the sun and moon shall rise,
And how happy shall,'" &c.

It is with pleasure I add that this stanza could never be more truly applied than at this present time [1792].—Boswell. [The Duke and Duchess of Leeds, to whom Mr. Boswell alludes in the latter part of this note, were Francis the fifth duke (who died in 1799), and his second wife Catherine Anguish, who still survives.—Ed.]

the last stanza repeated by him, that it nearly comprised all the advantages that wealth can give. Langton

"An eminent foreigner, when he was shown the British Museum, was very troublesome with many absurd inquiries. 'Now there, sir,' said he, 'is the difference between an Englishman and a Frenchman. A Frenchman must be always talking, whether he knows any thing of the matter or not; an Englishman is content to say nothing, when he has nothing to say.'

"His unjust contempt for foreigners was, indeed, extreme. One evening, at Old Slaughter's Coffee-house, when a number of them were talking loud about little matters, he said, 'Does not this confirm old Meynell's observation, *For any thing I see, foreigners are fools?*'

"He said, that once, when he had a violent tooth-ach, a Frenchman accosted him thus: *Ah, monsieur, vous étudiez trop.*

"Having spent an evening at Mr. Langton's with the Reverend Dr. Parr, he was much pleased with the conversation of that learned gentleman; and, after he was gone, said to Mr. Langton, 'Sir, I am obliged to you for having asked me this evening. Parr is a fair man[1]. I do not know when I have had an occasion of such free controversy. It is remarkable how much of a man's life may pass without meeting with any instance of this kind of open discussion.'

"We may fairly institute a criticism between Shakspeare and Corneille, as they both had, though in a different degree, the lights of a latter age. It

[1] When the corporation of Norwich applied to Johnson to point out to them a proper master for their grammar-school, he recommended Dr. Parr, on his ceasing to be usher to Sumner at Harrow.—BURNEY.

Langton is not so just between the Greek dramatick writers and Shakspeare. It may be replied to what is said by one of the remarkers on Shakspeare, that though Darius's shade had *prescience*, it does not necessarily follow that he had all *past* particulars revealed to him.

"Spanish plays, being wildly and improbably farcical, would please children here, as children are entertained with stories full of prodigies; their experience not being sufficient to cause them to be so readily startled at deviations from the natural course of life. The machinery of the pagans is uninteresting to us: when a goddess appears in Homer or Virgil we grow weary; still more so in the Grecian tragedies, as in that kind of composition a nearer approach to nature is intended. Yet there are good reasons for reading romances; as, the fertility of invention, the beauty of style and expression, the curiosity of seeing with what kind of performances the age and country in which they were written was delighted: for it is to be apprehended, that at the time when very wild improbable tales were well received, the people were in a barbarous state, and so on the footing of children, as has been explained.

"It is evident enough that no one who writes now can use the pagan deities and mythology; the only machinery, therefore, seems that of ministering spirits, the ghosts of the departed, witches and fairies, though these latter, as the vulgar superstition concerning them (which, while in its force, infected at least the imagination of those that had more advantage in education, though their reason set them free from it) is every day wearing out, seem likely to be of little further assistance in the machinery of poetry. As I recollect, Hammond introduces a hag or witch into

one of his love-elegies, where the effect is unmeaning and disgusting [1]. Langton

"The man who uses his talent of ridicule in creating or grossly exaggerating the instances he gives, who imputes absurdities that did not happen, or, when a man was a little ridiculous, describes him as having been very much so, abuses his talents greatly. The great use of delineating absurdities is, that we may know how far human folly can go: the account, therefore, ought of absolute necessity to be faithful. A certain character (naming the person), as to the general cast of it, is well described by Garrick, but a great deal of the phraseology he uses in it is quite his own, particularly in the proverbial comparisons, 'obstinate as a pig,' &c. but I don't know whether it might not be true of Lord ———[2], that from a too great eagerness of praise and popularity, and a politeness carried to a ridiculous excess, he was likely, after asserting a thing in general, to give it up again in parts. For instance, if he had said Reynolds was the first of painters, he was capable enough of giving up, as objections might happen to be severally made, first his outline,—then the grace in form,—then the colouring,—and lastly, to have owned that he was such a mannerist, that the disposition of his pictures was all alike.

"For hospitality, as formerly practised, there is no longer the same reason. Heretofore the poorer people were more numerous, and, from want of commerce, their means of getting a livelihood more difficult; therefore the supporting them was an act of great benevolence: now that the poor can find mainte-

[1] [Not more so than the rest of the elegy (the fifth), which is certainly, in every point of view, the worst of all Hammond's productions. Johnson exposes the absurdity of modern mythology very forcibly in his life of Hammond.—Ed.]

[2] [Perhaps Lord Corke.—Ed.]

Langton nance for themselves, and their labour is wanted, a general undiscerning hospitality tends to ill, by withdrawing them from their work to idleness and drunkenness. Then, formerly rents were received in kind, so that there was a great abundance of provisions in possession of the owners of the lands, which, since the plenty of money afforded by commerce, is no longer the case.

"Hospitality to strangers and foreigners in our country is now almost at an end; since, from the increase of them that come to us, there have been a sufficient number of people that have found an interest in providing inns and proper accommodations, which is in general a more expedient method for the entertainment of travellers. Where the travellers and strangers are few, more of that hospitality subsists, as it has not been worth while to provide places of accommodation. In Ireland, there is still hospitality to strangers in some degree; in Hungary and Poland, probably more.

"Colman, in a note on his translation of Terence, talking of Shakspeare's learning, asks, 'What says Farmer to this? What says Johnson?' Upon this he observed, 'Sir, let Farmer answer for himself: *I* never engaged in this controversy. I always said Shakspeare had Latin enough to grammaticise his English.'

"A clergyman, whom he characterised as one who loved to say little oddities, was affecting one day, at a bishop's table, a sort of slyness and freedom not in character, and repeated, as if part of 'The Old Man's Wish,' a song by Dr. Walter Pope, a verse bordering on licentiousness. Johnson rebuked him in the finest manner, by first showing him that he did not know the passage he was aiming at, and thus humbling him: 'Sir, that is not the song: it is thus.' And

he gave it right. Then, looking stedfastly on him, Langton
'Sir, there is a part of that song which I should wish to exemplify in my own life:

"May I govern my passions with absolute sway!"'

"Being asked if Barnes knew a good deal of Greek, he answered, 'I doubt, sir, he was *unoculus inter cæcos*[1].'

"He used frequently to observe, that men might be very eminent in a profession, without our perceiving any particular power of mind in them in conversation. 'It seems strange,' said he, 'that a man should see so far to the right, who sees so short a way to the left. Burke is the only man whose common conversation corresponds with the general fame which he has in the world. Take up whatever topick you please, he is ready to meet you.'

"A gentleman, by no means deficient in literature, having discovered less acquaintance with one of the classicks than Johnson expected, when the gentleman left the room, he observed, 'You see, now, how little any body reads.' Mr. Langton happening to mention his having read a good deal in Clenardus's Greek Grammar[2], 'Why, sir,' said he, 'who is there in this town who knows any thing of Clenardus but

[1] Johnson, in his Life of Milton, after mentioning that great poet's extraordinary fancy, that the world was in its decay, and that his book was to be written in an age too late for heroick poesy, thus concludes: "However inferiour to the heroes who were born in better ages, he might still be great among his contemporaries, with the hope of growing every day greater in the dwindle of posterity; he might still be a giant among the pigmies, *the one-eyed monarch of the blind*."—J. Boswell.

[2] Nicholas Clenard, who was born in Brabant, and died at Grenada in 1542, was a great traveller and linguist. Beside his Greek Grammar (of which an improved edition was published by Vossius at Amsterdam in 1626), he wrote a Hebrew Grammar, and an account of his travels in various countries, in Latin (Epistolarum Libri duo, 8vo. 1556)—a very rare work, of which there is a copy in the Bodleian Library. His Latin (says the author of Nouveau Dictionnaire Historique, 1789) would have been more pure, if he had not known so many languages.—Malone.

Langton you and I[1]?' And upon Mr. Langton's mentioning that he had taken the pains to learn by heart the Epistle of St. Basil, which is given in that grammar as a praxis, 'Sir,' said he, 'I never made such an effort to attain Greek.'

"Of Dodsley's 'Publick Virtue, a poem,' he said, 'It was fine *blank*,' (meaning to express his usual contempt for blank verse): however, this miserable poem did not sell, and my poor friend Doddy said Publick Virtue was not a subject to interest the age.

"Mr. Langton, when a very young man, read Dodsley's 'Cleone, a Tragedy,' to him, not aware of his extreme impatience to be read to. As it went on, he turned his face to the back of his chair, and put himself into various attitudes, which marked his uneasiness. At the end of an act, however, he said, 'Come, let's have some more; let's go into the slaughter-house again, Lanky. But I am afraid there is more blood than brains.' Yet he afterwards said, 'When I heard you read it, I thought higher of its power of language; when I read it myself, I was more sensible of its pathetick effect;' and then he paid it a compliment which many will think very extravagant. 'Sir,' said he, 'if Otway had written this play, no other of his pieces would have been remembered.' Dodsley himself, upon this being repeated to him, said, 'It was too much.' It must be remembered, that Johnson always appeared not to be sufficiently sensible of the merit of Otway[2].

"'Snatches of reading,' said he, 'will not make a Bentley or a Clarke. They are, however, in a certain degree advantageous. I would put a child into a

[1] [Mr. Langton, as has been already observed, was very studious of Greek literature.—ED.]

[2] This assertion concerning Johnson's insensibility to the pathetick powers of Otway is *too round*. I once asked him, whether he did not think Otway frequently tender: when he answered, "Sir, he is all tenderness."—BURNEY.

library (where no unfit books are), and let him read at his choice. A child should not be discouraged from reading any thing that he takes a liking to, from a notion that it is above his reach. If that be the case, the child will soon find it out and desist; if not, he of course gains the instruction; which is so much the more likely to come, from the inclination with which he takes up the study.' Langton

"Though he used to censure carelessness with great vehemence, he owned, that he once, to avoid the trouble of locking up five guineas, hid them, he forgot where, so that he could not find them.

"A gentleman who introduced his brother to Dr. Johnson was earnest to recommend him to the doctor's notice, which he did by saying, 'When we have sat together some time, you'll find my brother grow very entertaining.' 'Sir,' said Johnson, 'I can wait.'

"When the rumour was strong that we should have a war, because the French would assist the Americans, he rebuked a friend with some asperity for supposing it, saying, 'No, sir, national faith is not yet sunk so low.'

"In the latter part of his life, in order to satisfy himself whether his mental faculties were impaired, he resolved that he would try to learn a new language, and fixed upon the Low Dutch for that purpose, and this he continued till he had read about one half of 'Thomas à Kempis;' and, finding that there appeared no abatement of his power of acquisition, he then desisted, as thinking the experiment had been duly tried. Mr. Burke justly observed, that this was not the most vigorous trial, Low Dutch being a language so near to our own[1]: had it been one of the languages

[1] [See *ante*, p. 91 and *n.*—ED.]

Langton entirely different, he might have been very soon satisfied.

"Mr. Langton and he having gone to see a free-mason's funeral procession when they were at Rochester, and some solemn musick being played on French-horns, he said, 'This is the first time that I have ever been affected by musical sounds;' adding, 'that the impression made upon him was of a melancholy kind.' Mr. Langton saying, that this effect was a fine one,—JOHNSON. 'Yes, if it softens the mind so as to prepare it for the reception of salutary feelings, it may be good: but inasmuch as it is melancholy *per se*, it is bad [1].'

Piozzi, p. 76. ["He delighted," says Mrs. Piozzi, "no more in music than in painting; in fact he was almost as deaf as he was blind."]

Hawk. Apoph. p. 197. [Yet of musick, he, at another time, said, "It is the only sensual pleasure without vice."]

"Goldsmith had long a visionary project, that some time or other, when his circumstances should be easier, he would go to Aleppo, in order to acquire a knowledge, as far as might be, of any arts peculiar to the East, and introduce them into Britain. When this was talked of in Dr. Johnson's company, he said, 'Of all men Goldsmith is the most unfit to go out upon such an inquiry; for he is utterly ignorant of such arts as we already possess, and consequently could not know what would be accessions to our present stock of mechanical knowledge. Sir, he would bring home a grinding barrow, which you see in every street in London, and think that he had furnished a wonderful improvement.'

[1] The French-horn, however, is so far from being melancholy *per se*, that when the strain is light, and in the field, there is nothing so cheerful! It was the funeral occasion, and probably the solemnity of the strain, that produced the plaintive effect here mentioned.—BURNEY.

"'Greek, sir,' said he, 'is like lace; every man gets as much of it as he can[1].' Langton

"When Lord Charles Hay[2], after his return from America, was preparing his defence to be offered to the court-martial which he had demanded, having heard Mr. Langton as high in expressions of admiration of Johnson as he usually was, he requested that Dr. Johnson might be introduced to him; and Mr. Langton having mentioned it to Johnson, he very kindly and readily agreed; and, being presented by Mr. Langton to his lordship, while under arrest, he saw him several times; upon one of which occasions Lord Charles read to him what he had prepared, which Johnson signified his approbation of, saying, 'It is a very good soldierly defence.' Johnson said that he had advised his lordship, that as it was in vain to contend with those who were in possession of power, if they would offer him the rank of lieutenant-general, and a government, it would be better judged to desist from urging his complaints. It is well known that his lordship died before the sentence was made known.

"Johnson one day gave high praise to Dr. Bentley's verses[3] in Dodsley's Collection, which he recited with

[1] It should be remembered, that this was said twenty-five or thirty years ago, when lace was very generally worn.—MALONE. [But even with this allowance the meaning of the phrase does not seem clear—perhaps Johnson said that Greek was like lace; every man *wears* (that is, displays) as much of it as he can. —ED.]

[2] [See *ante*, vol. iii. p. 375.—ED.]

[3] Dr. Johnson, in his Life of Cowley, says, that these are "the only English verses which Bentley is known to have written." I shall here insert them, and hope my readers will apply them.

"Who strives to mount Parnassus' hill,
And thence poetick laurels bring,
Must first acquire due force and skill,
Must fly with swan's or eagle's wing.

"Who Nature's treasures would explore,
Her mysteries and arcana know,
Must high as lofty Newton soar,
Must stoop as delving Woodward low.

Langton his usual energy. Dr. Adam Smith, who was present, observed, in his decisive professorial manner, 'Very well,—very well.' Johnson, however, added, 'Yes, they *are* very well, sir; but you may observe in what manner they are well. They are the forcible verses of a man of a strong mind, but not accustomed to write verse; for there is some uncouthness in the expression [1].'

"Drinking tea one day at Garrick's with Mr. Lang-

"Who studies ancient laws and rites,
Tongues, arts, and arms, and history,
Must drudge, like Seldon, days and nights,
And in the endless labour die.

"Who travels in religious jars,
(Truth mixt with errour, shades with rays,)
Like Whiston, wanting pyx or stars,
In ocean wide or sinks or strays.

"But grant our hero's hope long toil
And comprehensive genius crown,
All sciences, all arts his spoil,
Yet what reward, or what renown?

"Envy, innate in vulgar souls,
Envy steps in and stops his rise;
Envy with poison'd tarnish fouls
His lustre, and his worth decries.

"He lives inglorious or in want,
To college and old books confined;
Instead of learn'd, he 's call'd pedant;
Dunces advanced, he 's left behind;
Yet left content, a genuine stoick he—
Great without patron, rich without South Sea."—Boswell.

A different, and probably a more accurate copy of these spirited verses is to be found in "The Grove, or a Collection of Original Poems and Translations," &c. 1721. In this miscellany the last stanza, which in Dodsley's copy is unquestionably uncouth, is thus exhibited:

"*Inglorious or by wants enthrall'd*,
To college and old books confined,
A pedant from his learning call'd,
Dunces advanced, he 's left behind."—J. Boswell.

[1] The difference between Johnson and Smith is apparent even in this slight instance. Smith was a man of extraordinary application, and had his mind crowded with all manner of subjects; but the force, acuteness, and vivacity of Johnson were not to be found there. He had book-making so much in his thoughts, and was so chary of what might be turned to account in that way, that he once said to Sir Joshua Reynolds, that he made it a rule, when in company, never to talk of what he understood. Beauclerk had for a short time a pretty high opinion of Smith's conversation. Garrick, after listening to him for a while, as to one of whom his expectations had been raised, turned slily to a friend, and whispered him, "What say you to this?—eh? *Flabby*, I think." —Boswell.

ton, he was questioned if he was not somewhat of a heretick as to Shakspeare. Said Garrick, 'I doubt he is a little of an infidel.' 'Sir,' said Johnson, 'I will stand by the lines I have written on Shakspeare in my prologue at the opening of your theatre.' Mr. Langton suggested, that in the line, Langton

> 'And panting Time toil'd after him in vain,'

Johnson might have had in his eye the passage in the 'Tempest,' where Prospero says of Miranda,

> '——— She will outstrip all praise,
> And make it halt behind her.'

Johnson said nothing. Garrick then ventured to observe, 'I do not think that the happiest line in the praise of Shakspeare.' Johnson exclaimed (smiling), 'Prosaical rogues! next time I write, I 'll make both time and space pant [1].'

"It is well known that there was formerly a rude custom for those who were sailing upon the Thames to accost each other as they passed in the most abusive language they could invent; generally, however, with as much satirical humour as they were capable of producing. Addison gives a specimen of this ribaldry in Number 383 of 'The Spectator,' when Sir Roger de Coverly and he are going to

[1] I am sorry to see in the "Transactions of the Royal Society of Edinburgh," vol. ii. "An Essay on the Character of Hamlet," written, I should suppose, by a very young man, though called "Reverend," who speaks with presumptuous petulance of the first literary character of his age. Amidst a cloudy confusion of words (which hath of late too often passed in Scotland for *metaphysicks*), he thus ventures to criticise one of the noblest lines in our language:—"Dr. Johnson has remarked, that 'Time toiled after him in vain.' But I should apprehend, that this is *entirely to mistake the character*. Time toils after *every great man*, as well as after Shakspeare. The *workings* of an ordinary mind *keep pace*, indeed, with time; they move no faster; *they have their beginning, their middle, and their end*; but superiour natures can *reduce these into a point*. They do not, indeed, *suppress* them; but they *suspend*, or they *lock them up in the breast*." The learned society, under whose sanction such gabble is ushered into the world, would do well to offer a premium to any one who will discover its meaning.—BOSWELL.

Langton Spring-garden [1]. Johnson was once eminently successful in this species of contest. A fellow having attacked him with some coarse raillery, Johnson answered him thus, 'Sir, your wife, *under pretence of keeping a bawdy-house,* is a receiver of stolen goods.' One evening when he and Mr. Burke and Mr. Langton were in company together, and the admirable scolding of Timon of Athens was mentioned, this instance of Johnson's was quoted, and thought to have at least equal excellence.

"As Johnson always allowed the extraordinary talents of Mr. Burke, so Mr. Burke was fully sensible of the wonderful powers of Johnson. Mr. Langton recollects having passed an evening with both of them, when Mr. Burke repeatedly entered upon topicks which it was evident he would have illustrated with extensive knowledge and richness of expression; but Johnson always seized upon the conversation, in which, however, he acquitted himself in a most masterly manner. As Mr. Burke and Mr. Langton were walking home, Mr. Burke observed that Johnson had been very great that night: Mr. Langton joined in this, but added, he could have wished to hear more from another person (plainly intimating that he meant Mr. Burke). 'O, no,' said Mr. Burke, 'it is enough for me to have rung the bell to him.'

"Beauclerk having observed to him of one of their friends, that he was awkward at counting money; 'Why, sir,' said Johnson, 'I am likewise awkward at counting money. But then, sir, the reason is plain; I have had very little money to count.'

"He had an abhorrence of affectation. Talking of old Mr. Langton, of whom he said, 'Sir, you will seldom see such a gentleman, such are his stores of

[1] [Vauxhall.—Ed.]

literature [1], such his knowledge in divinity, and such his exemplary life;' he added, 'and, sir, he has no grimace, no gesticulation, no bursts of admiration on trivial occasions: he never embraces you with an overacted cordiality.' Langton

"Being in company with a gentleman who thought fit to maintain Dr. Berkeley's ingenious philosophy, that nothing exists but as perceived by some mind; when the gentleman was going away, Johnson said to him, 'Pray, sir, don't leave us; for we may perhaps forget to think of you, and then you will cease to exist.'

"Goldsmith, upon being visited by Johnson one day in the Temple, said to him with a little jealousy of the appearance of his accommodation, 'I shall soon be in better chambers than these.' Johnson at the same time checked him and paid him a handsome compliment, implying that a man of his talents should be above attention to such distinctions,—'Nay, sir, never mind that: *Nil te quæsiveris extra.*'

"At the time when his pension was granted to him, he said, with a noble literary ambition, 'Had this happened twenty years ago, I should have gone to Constantinople to learn Arabick, as Pococke did.'

"As an instance of the niceness of his taste, though he praised West's translation of Pindar, he pointed out the following passages as faulty, by expressing a circumstance so minute as to detract from the general dignity which should prevail:

'Down then from thy glittering *nail*,
Take, O Muse, thy Dorian lyre.'

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[1] [See, however, *ante*, v. iii. p. 411.—Ed.]

Langton "When Mr. Vesey[1] was proposed as a member of the Literary Club, Mr. Burke began by saying that he was a man of gentle manners. 'Sir,' said Johnson, 'you need say no more. When you have said a man of gentle manners, you have said enough.'

Piozzi, p. 62. [Yet he afterwards found that gentle manners alone were *not* "*enough*;" for when Mrs. Piozzi once asked him concerning the conversational powers of Mr. Vesey[2], with whom she was unacquainted, "He talked to me," said Johnson, "one day at *the Club* concerning Catiline's conspiracy, so I withdrew my attention and thought about Tom Thumb."]

Langton "The late Mr. Fitzherbert told Mr. Langton that Johnson said to him, 'Sir, a man has no more right to *say* an uncivil thing, than to *act* one; no more right to say a rude thing to another than to knock him down.'

"'My dear friend, Dr. Bathurst,' said he, with a warmth of approbation, 'declared he was glad that his father, who was a West India planter, had left his affairs in total ruin, because, having no estate, he was not under the temptation of having slaves.'

"Richardson had little conversation, except about his own works, of which Sir Joshua Reynolds said he was always willing to talk, and glad to have them introduced. Johnson, when he carried Mr. Langton to see him, professed that he could bring him out into conversation, and used this allusive expression, 'Sir, I can make him *rear*.' But he failed; for in

[1] The Right Honourable Agmondesham Vesey was elected a member of the Literary Club in 1773, and died August 11th, 1786.—MALONE.

[2] [Mrs. Piozzi only says "*a gentleman*." Mr. Malone's MS. note to the Anecdotes supplies the name. Miss Reynolds also *recollects* an anecdote of Mr. Vesey's first appearance at the Club, which proves that, however Dr. Johnson may have admired Mr. Vesey's *gentle manners*, he did not imitate them. "When a gentleman at the *Club*, on presenting his friend, said, 'This, sir, is Mr. Vesey'—'I see him,' said Dr. Johnson, and immediately turned away." *Recollections*.—ED.]

that interview Richardson said little else than that there lay in the room a translation of his Clarissa into German. Langton

"Once when somebody produced a newspaper in which there was a letter of stupid abuse of Sir Joshua Reynolds, of which Johnson himself came in for a share, 'Pray,' said he, 'let us have it read aloud from beginning to end; which being done, he, with a ludicrous earnestness, and not directing his look to any particular person, called out, 'Are we alive after all this satire?'

"He had a strong prejudice against the political character of Secker, one instance of which appeared at Oxford, where he expressed great dissatisfaction at his varying the old-established toast, 'Church and king.' 'The Archbishop of Canterbury,' said he, with an affected, smooth, smiling grimace, 'drinks, 'Constitution in church and state.'' Being asked what difference there was between the two toasts, he said, 'Why, sir, you may be sure he meant something.' Yet when the life of that prelate, prefixed to his sermons by Dr. Porteus and Dr. Stinton, his chaplains, first came out, he read it with the utmost avidity, and said, 'It is a life well written, and that well deserves to be recorded.'

"Of a certain noble lord[1], he said, 'Respect him you could not; for he had no mind of his own. Love him you could not; for that which you could do with him every one else could.'

"Of Dr. Goldsmith he said, 'No man was more foolish when he had not a pen in his hand, or more wise when he had.'

"He told, in his lively manner, the following literary anecdote:—'Green and Guthrie, an Irishman and a Scotchman, undertook a translation of Du-

[1] [See *ante*, p. 347, an allusion to his over-civil lord.—ED.]

Langton halde's History of China. Green said of Guthrie, that he knew no English, and Guthrie of Green, that he knew no French; and these two undertook to translate Duhalde's History of China. In this translation there was found, 'the twenty-sixth day of the new moon.' Now, as the whole age of the moon is but twenty-eight days, the moon, instead of being new, was nearly as old as it could be. The blunder arose from their mistaking the word *neuvième*, ninth, for *nouvelle*, or *neuve*, new.'

"Talking of Dr. Blagden's [1] copiousness and precision of communication, Dr. Johnson said, 'Blagden, sir, is a delightful fellow [2].'

"On occasion of Dr. Johnson's publishing his pamphlet of 'The False Alarm,' there came out a very angry answer (by many supposed to be by Mr. Wilkes). Dr. Johnson determined on not answering it; but, in conversation with Mr. Langton, mentioned a particular or two, which, if he *had* replied to it, he might perhaps have inserted. In the answerer's pamphlet, it had been said with solemnity, 'Do you consider, sir, that a house of commons is to the people as a creature is to its Creator?' 'To this question,' said Dr. Johnson, 'I could have replied, that, in the first place, the idea of a Creator must be such as that he has a power to unmake or annihilate his creature. Then it cannot be conceived that a creature can make laws for its Creator [3].'

"'Depend upon it,' said he, 'that if a man *talks* of his misfortunes, there is something in them that is not disagreeable to him; for where there is nothing

[1] [Afterwards Sir Charles Blagden.—ED.]

[2] [Here in the first edition ended Mr. Langton's *Collectanea*.—ED.]

[3] His profound adoration of the Great First Cause was such as to set him above that "philosophy and vain deceit" with which men of narrow conceptions have been infected. I have heard him strongly maintain that "what is right is not so from any natural fitness, but because God wills it to be right;" and it is certainly so, because he has predisposed the relations of things so, as that which he wills must be right.—BOSWELL.

but pure misery, there never is any recourse to the mention of it.' Langton

"'A man must be a poor beast, that should *read* no more in quantity than he could *utter* aloud.'

"'.Imlac, in 'Rasselas,' I spelt with a *c* at the end, because it is less like English, which should always have the Saxon *k* added to the *c*[1].'

"'Many a man is mad in certain instances, and goes through life without having it perceived. For example, a madness has seized a person[2], of supposing himself obliged literally to pray continually: had the madness turned the opposite way, and the person thought it a crime ever to pray, it might not improbably have continued unobserved.'

"He appreliended that the delineation of *characters* in the end of the first book of the 'Retreat of the Ten Thousand' was the first instance of the kind that was known.

"'Supposing,' said he, 'a wife to be of a studious or argumentative turn, it would be very troublesome: for instance, if a woman should continually dwell upon the subject of the Arian heresy.'

"'No man speaks concerning another, even suppose it to be in his praise, if he thinks he does not hear him, exactly as he would if he thought he was within hearing.'

"'The applause of a single human being is of great consequence.' This he said to me with great earnestness of manner, very near the time of his decease, on occasion of having desired me to read a letter addressed to him from some person in the

[1] I hope the authority of the great master of our language will stop that curtailing innovation by which we see *critic*, *public*, &c. frequently written instead of *critick*, *publick*, &c.—BOSWELL. [Why should we not retrench an obvious superfluity? In the preceding age, *public* and *critic* were written *publique* and *critique*.—ED.]

[2] [Johnson had, no doubt, his poor friend Smart in his recollection: see *ante*, vol. i. p. 406.—ED.]

Langton north of England; which when I had done, and he asked me what the contents were, as I thought being particular upon it might fatigue him, it being of great length, I only told him in general that it was highly in his praise; and then he expressed himself as above.

"He mentioned with an air of satisfaction what Baretti had told him; that, meeting in the course of his studying English with an excellent paper in 'The Spectator,' one of four that were written by the respectable dissenting minister Mr. Grove of Taunton, and observing the genius and energy of mind that it exhibits, it greatly quickened his curiosity to visit our country; as he thought, if such were the lighter periodical essays of our authors, their productions on more weighty occasions must be wonderful indeed!

"He observed once, at Sir Joshua Reynolds's, that a beggar in the street will more readily ask alms from a *man*, though there should be no marks of wealth in his appearance, than from even a well-dressed *woman*[1]; which he accounted for from the great degree of carefulness as to money, that is to be found in women: saying farther upon it, that the opportunities in general that they possess of improving their condition are much fewer than men have; and adding, as he looked round the company, which consisted of men only, 'There is not one of us who does not think he might be richer, if he would use his endeavour.'

"He thus characterised an ingenious writer of his acquaintance: 'Sir, he is an enthusiast by rule.'

"'*He may hold up that* SHIELD *against all his enemies*,' was an observation on Homer, in reference

[1] Sterne is of a direct contrary opinion. See his "Sentimental Journey;" article, *The Mystery*.—BOSWELL.

to his description of the shield of Achilles, made by Mrs. Fitzherbert, wife to his friend Mr. Fitzherbert of Derbyshire, and respected by Dr. Johnson as a very fine one[1]. He had in general a very high opinion of that lady's understanding. Langton

"An observation of Bathurst's may be mentioned, which Johnson repeated, appearing to acknowledge it to be well founded; namely, it was somewhat remarkable how seldom, on occasion of coming into the company of any new person, one felt any wish or inclination to see him again."

[As we now approach the period when his intimacy with Mrs. Thrale ceased, this seems to be a proper place for inserting, after the *Collectanea* of Mr. Langton, those anecdotes published by that lady which have not been introduced in other places of this work.] Ed.

["To recollect and repeat the sayings of Dr. Johnson, is almost all that can be done by the writers of his life; as his life, at least since my acquaintance with him, consisted in little else than *talking*, when he was not absolutely employed in some serious piece of work; and whatever work he did seemed so much below his powers of performance, that he appeared the idlest of all human beings; ever musing till he was called out to converse, and conversing till the fatigue of his friends, or the promptitude of his own temper to take offence, consigned him back again to silent meditation. Piozzi Anec. p. 17.

"Dr. Johnson indeed, as he was a very talking p. 160.

[1] [This passage seems not very intelligible. Perhaps the observation might mean that Homer's description of the shield of Achilles was so masterly that it alone was sufficient to prove him a great poet, and to turn all the shafts of criticism. The reader cannot have failed to observe that many of these anecdotes are very obscurely expressed, and that different topics seem sometimes jumbled into one paragraph.—Ed.]

Piozzi Anec. man himself, had an idea that nothing promoted happiness so much as conversation.

p. 212. "The saying of the old philosopher, who observes, 'that he who wants least is most like the gods, who want nothing,' was a favourite sentence with Dr. Johnson, who on his own part required less attendance, sick or well, than ever I saw any human creature. Conversation was all he required to make him happy; and when he would have tea made at two o'clock in the morning, it was only that there might be a certainty of detaining his companions round him. On that principle it was that he preferred winter to summer, when the heat of the weather gave people an excuse to stroll about, and walk for pleasure in the shade, while he wished to sit still on a chair, and chat day after day, till somebody proposed a drive in the coach; and that was the most delicious moment of his life. 'But the carriage must stop sometime,' as he said, 'and the people would come home at last;' so his pleasure was of short duration.

p. 61. "As ethics or figures, or metaphysical reasoning, was the sort of talk he most delighted in, so no kind of conversation pleased him less, I think, than when the subject was historical fact or general polity. 'What shall we learn from *that* stuff?' said Johnson: 'let us not fancy like Swift that we are exalting a woman's character by telling how she

Cad. & Vanessa 'Could name the ancient heroes round,
Explain for what they were renown'd, &c.''

I must not however lead my readers to suppose that he meant to reserve such talk for *men*'s company as a proof of pre-eminence. 'He never,' as he expressed it, 'desired to hear of the *Punic war* while he lived: such conversation was lost time,' he said, 'and carried one away from common life, leaving no

ideas behind which could serve *living wight* as warning or direction. Piozzi Anec.

> 'How I should act is not the case,
> But how would Brutus in my place?'

And now,' cries Dr. Johnson, laughing with obstreperous violence, 'if these two foolish lines can be equalled in folly [1], except by the two succeeding ones —show them me.'

"With a contempt not inferior he received the praises of a pretty lady's face and behaviour. 'She says nothing, sir,' answered Johnson; 'a talking blackamoor were better than a white creature who adds nothing to life—and sitting down before one thus desperately silent takes away the confidence one should have in the company of her chair if she were once out of it.' p. 160.

"No one was however less willing to begin any

[1] [These are two lines of Swift's *verses to Stella*, 1720. Dr. Johnson's censure was too violent, and indeed he seems not to have correctly understood the dean's illustration. He is laying down certain general rules for distinguishing what *honour* is, and he exposes the many false meanings which the world assigns to that word. He proceeds to say that men should not decide what is *honourable* by a reference to *their own* feelings and circumstances, which naturally bias the judgment, but should consider, without reference to self, how a wise and good man would act.

> "In points of honour to be tried,
> All passion must be laid aside;
> Ask no advice, but think alone;
> Suppose the question not your own:
> 'How shall I act?' is not the case;
> But how would *Brutus* in my place?
> In such a case would *Cato* bleed?
> And how would *Socrates* proceed?"

It is plain here, and still plainer from the whole context of the poem, that *Brutus, Cato,* and *Socrates* are here put as the representatives of Patriotism and Virtue, and as the names of *Zoilus, Bavius,* or *Pandarus* are used generically to signify *infamous persons:* so here, *Brutus, Cato,* and *Socrates* (which might as well have been *Sydney, Somers,* or *Clarendon,* or any other illustrious names), are used as terms of honour to give point and a kind of dramatic effect to the general proposition. Swift never dreamt (as Mrs. Piozzi's report would lead us to think that Johnson supposed) to advise that *our* rules of conduct were to be drawn from the actual events of Greek and Roman history. This would have been as absurd as Johnson's own introduction of Roman manners into *London* in his description of the burning of Orgilio's palace, or the invocation of Democritus, which sounds so strangely amidst the modern illustrations of his own beautiful and splendid *Vanity of Human Wishes.*—ED.]

Piozzi Anec. discourse than himself. His friend Mr. Thomas Tyers[1] said he was like the ghosts, who never speak till they are spoken to; and he liked the expression so well, that he often repeated it. He had indeed no necessity to lead the stream of chat to a favourite channel, that his fulness on the subject might be shown more clearly, whatever was the topic; and he usually left the choice to others. His information enlightened, his argument strengthened, and his wit made it ever remembered. Of him it might have been said, as he often delighted to say of Edmund Burke, 'that you could not stand five minutes with that man beneath a shed while it rained, but you must be convinced you had been standing with the greatest man you had ever yet seen.'

p. 184. "Having reduced his amusements to the pleasures of conversation merely, what wonder that Johnson should have had an avidity for the sole delight he was able to enjoy? No man conversed so well as he on every subject; no man so acutely discerned the reason of every fact, the motive of every action, the end of every design. He was indeed often pained by the ignorance or causeless wonder of those who knew less than himself, though he seldom drove them away with apparent scorn, unless he thought they added presumption to stupidity.

p. 73. "He would sometimes good-naturedly enter into a long chat for the instruction or entertainment of people he despised. I perfectly recollect his condescending to delight my daughter's dancing-master with a long argument about *his* art; which the man protested, at the close of the discourse, the doctor knew more of than himself, and was astonished, enlightened, and amused, by the talk of a person little likely to make a good disquisition upon dancing.

[1] [See *ante*, vol. i. p. 304, and vol. iii. p. 166.—Ed.]

"I have sometimes indeed been rather pleased than vexed when Dr. Johnson has given a rough answer to a man who perhaps deserved one only half as rough, because I knew he would repent of his hasty reproof, and make us all amends by some conversation at once instructive and entertaining. A young fellow asked him abruptly one day, 'Pray, sir, what and where is Palmyra? I heard somebody talk last night of the ruins of Palmyra.' ''Tis a hill in Ireland,' replies Johnson, 'with palms growing on the top, and a bog at the bottom, and so they call it *Palm-mira*.' Seeing however that the lad thought him serious, and thanked him for the information, he undeceived him very gently indeed; told him the history, geography, and chronology, of Tadmor in the wilderness, with every incident, I think, that literature could furnish or eloquence express, from the building of Solomon's palace down to the voyage of Dawkins and Wood. Piozzi Anec. p. 73.

"He had no taste for the usual enjoyments and occupations of a country life, and would say, 'that after one had gathered apples in an orchard, one wishes to see them well baked, and removed to a London eating-house for enjoyment.' With such notions, who can wonder he often complained of us for living so much in the country—'Feeding the chickens,' as he said I did, 'till I starved my own understanding.' 'Get, however,' said he, 'a book about gardening, and study it hard, since you *will* pass your life with birds and flowers, and learn to raise the *largest* turnips and to breed the *biggest* fowls.' It was vain to assure him that the goodness of such dishes did not depend upon their size; he laughed at the people who covered their canals with foreign fowls, 'when,' says he, 'our own geese and ganders are twice as large; if we fetched better animals from distant nations, there might be some p. 205.

Piozzi Anec. sense in the preference: but to get cows from Alderney, or water-fowl from China, only to see nature degenerating round us, is a poor ambition indeed.'

p. 206. "Nor was Dr. Johnson more merciful with regard to the *amusements* people are contented to call such. 'You hunt in the morning,' says he, 'and crowd to the public rooms at night, and call it *diversion;* when your heart knows it is perishing with poverty of pleasures, and your wits get blunted for want of some other mind to sharpen them upon. There is in this world no real delight (excepting those of sensuality) but exchange of ideas in conversation; and whoever has once experienced the full flow of London talk, when he retires to country friendships and rural sports, must either be contented to turn baby again and play with the rattle, or he will pine away like a great fish in a little pond, and die for want of his usual food.'—'Books without the knowledge of life are useless,' I have heard him say; 'for what should books teach but the art of *living?* To study manners, however, only in coffee-houses, is more than equally imperfect; the minds of men who acquire no solid learning, and only exist on the daily forage that they pick up by running about, and snatching what drops from their neighbours, as ignorant as themselves, will never ferment into any knowledge valuable or durable; but like the light wines we drink in hot countries, please for the moment, though incapable of keeping. In the study of mankind much will be found to swim as froth, and much must sink as feculence, before the wine can have its effect, and become that noblest liquor which rejoices the heart and gives vigour to the imagination.'

p. 81. "'Solitude,' he one day added, 'is dangerous to reason, without being favourable to virtue: pleasures

of some sort are necessary to the intellectual as to the corporeal health; and those who resist gaiety will be likely for the most part to fall a sacrifice to appetite; for the solicitations of sense are always at hand; and a dram to a vacant and solitary person is a speedy and seducing relief. Remember,' continued he, 'that the solitary mortal is certainly luxurious, probably superstitious, and possibly mad: the mind stagnates for want of employment, grows morbid, and is extinguished like a candle in foul air.' It was on this principle that Johnson encouraged parents to carry their daughters early and much into company; 'for what harm can be done before so many witnesses? Solitude is the surest nurse of all prurient passions; and a girl in the hurry of preparation, or tumult of gaiety, has neither inclination nor leisure to let tender expressions soften or sink into her heart. The ball, the show, are not the dangerous places: no, 't is the private friend, the kind consoler, the companion of the easy vacant hour, whose compliance with her opinions can flatter her vanity, and whose conversation can just soothe, without ever stretching her mind, that is the lover to be feared; he who buzzes in her ear at court, or at the opera, must be contented to buzz in vain.' These notions Dr. Johnson carried so very far, that I have heard him say, 'If you would shut up any man with any woman, so as to make them derive their whole pleasure from each other, they would inevitably fall in love, as it is called, with each other; but at six months' end, if you would throw them both into public life, where they might change partners at pleasure, each would soon forget that fondness which mutual dependence and the paucity of general amusement alone had created, and each would separately feel delighted by their release.'

Piozzi Anec. p. 81.

Piozzi Anec. p. 117. "The vacuity of life had at some early period of his life struck so forcibly on the mind of Dr. Johnson, that it became by repeated impression his favourite hypothesis, and the general tenor of his reasonings commonly ended there, wherever they might begin. Such things therefore as other philosophers often attribute to various and contradictory causes, appeared to him uniform enough; all was done to fill up the time, upon his principle. I used to tell him, that it was like the clown's answer in As You Like It, of 'Oh Lord, sir!' for that it suited every occasion. One man, for example, was profligate and wild, as we call it, followed the girls, or sat still at the gaming-table. 'Why, life must be filled up,' said Johnson, 'and the man who is not capable of intellectual pleasures must content himself with such as his senses can afford.' Another was a hoarder: 'Why, a fellow must do something; and what so easy to a narrow mind as hoarding halfpence till they turn into sixpences?'

"Avarice was a vice against which, however, I never much heard Dr. Johnson declaim, till one represented it to him connected with cruelty, or some such disgraceful companion. 'Do not,' said he, 'discourage your children from hoarding, if they have a taste to it: whoever lays up his penny rather than part with it for a cake, at least is not the slave of gross appetite; and shows besides a preference always to be esteemed, of the future to the present moment. Such a mind may be made a good one; but the natural spendthrift, who grasps his pleasures greedily and coarsely, and cares for nothing but immediate indulgence, is very little to be valued above a negro.'

p. 208. "He hated disguise, and nobody penetrated him readily. I showed him a letter written to a common

friend, who was at some loss for the explanation of it. 'Whoever wrote it,' says our doctor, 'could, if he chose it, make himself understood; but 'tis the letter of an *embarrassed man*, sir;' and so the event proved it to be. Piozzi Anec. p. 208.

"Mysteriousness in trifles offended him on every side: 'it commonly ended in guilt,' he said; 'for those who begin by concealment of innocent things will soon have something to hide which they dare not bring to light.' He therefore encouraged an openness of conduct, in women particularly, 'who,' he observed, 'were often led away, when children, by their delight and power of surprising.'

"He recommended, on something like the same principle, that when one person meant to serve another, he should not go about it slily, or, as we say, underhand, out of a false idea of delicacy, to surprise one's friend with an unexpected favour; 'which, ten to one,' says he, 'fails to oblige your acquaintance, who had some reasons against such a mode of obligation, which you might have known but for that superfluous cunning which you think an elegance. Oh! never be seduced by such silly pretences,' continued he; 'if a wench wants a good gown, do not give her a fine smelling-bottle, because that is more delicate: as I once knew a lady lend the key of her library to a poor scribbling dependent, as if she took the woman for an ostrich that could digest iron.' He said, indeed, 'that women were very difficult to be taught the proper manner of conferring pecuniary favours; that they always gave too much money or too little; for that they had an idea of delicacy accompanying their gifts, so that they generally rendered them either useless or ridiculous.' p. 209.

"I pitied a friend before him who had a whining wife, that found every thing painful to her, and no- p. 131

Piozzi Anec. p. 131. thing pleasing—'He does not know that she whimpers,' says Johnson; 'when a door has creaked for a fortnight together, you may observe, the master will scarcely give sixpence to get it oiled.'

"Of another lady, more insipid than offensive, I once heard him say, 'She has some softness indeed, but so has a pillow.' And when one observed in reply, that her husband's fidelity and attachment were exemplary, notwithstanding this low account at which her perfections were rated—'Why, sir,' cries the Doctor, 'being married to those sleepy-souled women, is just like playing at cards for nothing; no passion is excited, and the time is filled up. I do not however envy a fellow one of those honeysuckle wives, for my part, as they are but *creepers* at best, and commonly destroy the tree they so tenderly cling about.'

p. 211. "Needlework had a strenuous approver in Dr. Johnson, who said, 'that one of the great felicities of female life was the general consent of the world, that they might amuse themselves with petty occupations, which contributed to the lengthening their lives, and preserving their minds in a state of sanity.' 'A man cannot hem a pocket-handkerchief,' said a lady of quality to him one day, 'and so he runs mad, and torments his family and friends.' The expression struck him exceedingly, and when one acquaintance grew troublesome, and another unhealthy, he used to quote Lady Frances's[1] observation, 'That a man cannot hem a pocket-handkerchief.'

p. 212. "*Nice* people found no mercy from Dr. Johnson; such I mean as can dine only at four o'clock, who cannot bear to be waked at an unusual hour, or

[1] [Lady Frances Burgoyne, daughter of the last Lord Halifax.—Ed.]

miss a stated meal without inconvenience. *He* had no such prejudices himself, and with difficulty forgave them in another. 'Delicacy does not surely consist,' says he, 'in impossibility to be pleased; and that is false dignity indeed which is content to depend upon others.' Piozzi Anec.

"That poverty was an evil to be avoided by all honest means, however, no man was more ready to avow: concealed poverty particularly, which he said was the general corrosive that destroyed the peace of almost every family; to which no evening perhaps ever returned without some new project for hiding the sorrows and dangers of the next day. 'Want of money,' says Dr. Johnson, 'is sometimes concealed under pretended avarice, and sly hints of aversion to part with it; sometimes under stormy anger, and affectation of boundless rage; but oftener still under a show of thoughtless extravagance and gay neglect: while to a penetrating eye none of these wretched veils suffice to keep the cruel truth from being seen. Poverty is *hic et ubique*,' says he, 'and if you do shut the jade out of the door, she will always contrive in some manner to poke her pale lean face in at the window.' p. 196.

"As the mind of Dr. Johnson was greatly expanded, so his first care was for general, not particular or petty morality; and those teachers had more of his blame than praise, I think, who seek to oppress life with unnecessary scruples. 'Scruples would,' as he observed, 'certainly make men miserable, and seldom make them good. Let us ever,' he said, 'studiously fly from those instructors, against whom our Saviour denounces heavy judgments, for having bound up burdens grievous to be borne, and laid them on the shoulders of mortal men.' No one had, however, higher notions of the hard task of true christianity p. 85.

Piozzi Anec. than Johnson, whose daily terror lest he had not done enough originated in piety, but ended in little less than disease. Reasonable with regard to others, he had formed vain hopes of performing impossibilities himself; and finding his good works ever below his desires and intent, filled his imagination with fears that he should never obtain forgiveness for omissions of duty and criminal waste of time.

p. 68. "I used to tell him in jest, that his morality was easily contented; and when I have said something as if the wickedness of the world gave me concern, he would cry out aloud against canting, and protest that he thought there was very little gross wickedness in the world, and still less of extraordinary virtue.

p. 85. "Though no man perhaps made such rough replies as Dr. Johnson, yet nobody had a more just aversion for general satire; he always hated and censured Swift for his unprovoked bitterness against the professors of medicine; and used to challenge his friends, when they lamented the exorbitancy of physicians' fees, to produce him one instance of an estate raised by physic in England. When an acquaintance too was one day exclaiming against the tediousness of the law and its partiality: 'Let us hear, sir,' said Johnson, 'no general abuse; the law is the last result of human wisdom acting upon human experience for the benefit of the public.'

p. 194. "Dr. Johnson had indeed a veneration for the voice of mankind beyond what most people will own; and as he liberally confessed that all his own disappointments proceeded from himself, he hated to hear others complain of general injustice. I remember when lamentation was made of the neglect showed to Jeremiah Markland [1], a great philologist, as some one

[1] [Mr. Markland, who has favoured the editor with many kind and useful

ventured to call him—'He is a scholar undoubtedly, sir,' replied Dr. Johnson; 'but remember that he would run from the world, and that it is not the world's business to run after him. I hate a fellow whom pride, or cowardice, or laziness, drives into a corner, and does nothing when he is there but sit and *growl*: let him come out as I do, and *bark*.' Piozzi Anec.

"Dr. Johnson's knowledge of literary history was extensive and surprising; he knew every adventure of every book you could name almost, and was exceedingly pleased with the opportunity which writing the poets' lives gave him to display it. He loved to be set at work, and was sorry when he came to the end of the business he was about. p. 171.

"'Alas, madam!' continued he, 'how few books are there of which one ever can possibly arrive at the *last* page! Was there ever yet any thing written by mere man that was wished longer by its readers, excepting Don Quixote, Robinson Crusoe, and the Pilgrim's Progress?' After Homer's Iliad, Dr. John- p. 217.

suggestions, observes on this passage, that "Johnson's censure was undeserved. Jeremiah Markland was certainly no *growler*. He sought for, because he loved, retirement; and *rejected* all the honours and rewards which were liberally offered to his acceptance. During a long life, he devoted himself unceasingly to those pursuits for which he was best fitted, collating the classics, and illustrating the Scriptures. 'Sequantur alii famam, aucupentur Divitias, hic illa oculis irretortis contemplatus, post terga constanter rejecit .... In solitudinem se recepit, studiis excolendis et pauperibus sublevandis unicè intentus.' Such is the character given of Markland by his pupil and friend Edward Clarke." Mrs. Piozzi's flippant expression ("a great philologist as some one *ventured* to call him") will excite a smile, when we recollect what Markland has done as a philologist, and the estimation in which he has been held both by the most learned of his contemporaries (including Johnson himself), and the most distinguished scholars of our own time. Dr. Burney, in a tone of the highest panegyric, numbered him with Bentley, Dawes, Toup, and Porson; and a still later writer has thus candidly enumerated his merits: "Markland was endowed with a respectable portion of judgment and sagacity. He was very laborious, loved retirement, and spent a long life in the study of the Greek and Latin languages. For modesty, candour, literary honesty, and courteousness to other scholars, he is justly considered as the mode which ought to be proposed for the imitation of every critic."—*Quart. Rev.* vol. vii. p. 442: so far Mr. Markland. It is but just to all parties, that the Editor should add, that (whatever Johnson may have said in the current of conversation, and probably in allusion to some minute and unrecorded circumstance) he had a fixed respect for the talents and character of Markland. For it will be seen hereafter that on the 20th Oct. 1782, he wrote to Mr. Nichols, urging him to obtain some record of the life of Markland, who, with Jortin and Thirlby, he calls three contemporaries of great eminence.—ED.]

Piozzi Anec. son confessed that the work of Cervantes was the greatest in the world, speaking of it, I mean, as a book of entertainment.

p. 200. "He had sometimes fits of reading very violent; and when he was in earnest about getting through some particular pages, for I have heard him say he never read but one book [1], which he did not consider as obligatory, through in his whole life (and Lady Mary Wortley's Letters was the book), he would be quite lost to company, and withdraw all his attention to what he was reading, without the smallest knowledge or care about the noise made around him. His deafness made such conduct less odd and less difficult to him than it would have been to another man; but his advising others to take the same method, and pull a little book out when they were not entertained with what was going forward in society, seemed more likely to advance the growth of science than of polished manners, for which he always pretended extreme veneration.

p. 219. "Dr. Johnson was a great reader of French literature, and delighted exceedingly in Boileau's works. Moliere, I think, he had hardly sufficient taste of; and

[1] [On this passage Mr. Malone, in his MS. notes, says, "*Here we have another* gross exaggeration. *She does not state when he made this declaration. It might have been in* 1765, *and in the subsequent nineteen years he might have read* 500 *books through perhaps, though it certainly was not his usual custom to do so.*" Can the reader discover on what grounds the statement is called a *gross exaggeration*, when Mr. Malone admits that it accords with Johnson's *usual custom*? But we have many passages in Boswell which corroborate Mrs. Piozzi's statement, (see for instance vol. ii. p. 214, and *post*, 15th June, 1784.) The observation too as to the lady's having made no allowance for the *date* at which Johnson spoke, came rather inconsistently from Mr. Malone, who has laboriously made a deliberate blunder of the same kind that he imputes to Mrs. Piozzi: when Johnson observed, *ante*, vol. iv. p. 81, that "Thomas a Kempis was said to have been printed, in one language or another, as many times as there have been months since it first came out," Mr. Malone, with great gravity, informs us, "*this is improbable, because, according to this account, there would have been* 3600 *editions, that being the number of months between* 1492 *and* 1792," (*ante, loc. cit.*) Because Boswell's book was published in 1792, Mr. Malone makes his calculation on *that* year, without reference either to the year in which Johnson *quoted* the observation, or, what is more important, to the period at which the observation, which Johnson only quoted, was *originally made*.—ED.]

he used to condemn me for preferring La Bruyere to the Duc de Rochefoucault, 'who,' he said, 'was the only *gentleman* writer who wrote like a professed author.' Piozzi Anec.

"The recollection of such reading as had delighted him in his infancy, made him always persist in fancying that it was the only reading which could please an infant; and he used to condemn me for putting Newbery's books into their hands as too trifling to engage their attention. 'Babies do not want,' said he, 'to hear about babies; they like to be told of giants and castles, and of somewhat which can stretch and stimulate their little minds.' When in answer I would urge the numerous editions and quick sale of Tommy Prudent or Goody Two Shoes, 'Remember always,' said he, 'that the parents *buy* the books, and that the children never read them.' Mrs. Barbauld however had his best praise[1], and deserved it; no man was more struck than Dr. Johnson with voluntary descent from possible splendour to painful duty. p. 12.

"The remembrance of what had passed in his own childhood made Dr. Johnson very solicitous to preserve the felicity of children; and when he had persuaded Dr. Sumner[2] to remit the tasks usually given to fill up boys' time during the holidays, he rejoiced exceedingly in the success of his negotiation, and told me that he had never ceased representing to all the eminent schoolmasters in England, the absurd tyranny of poisoning the hour of permitted pleasure, by keeping future misery before the children's eyes, and tempting them by bribery or falsehood to evade it. 'Bob Sumner,' said he, 'however, I have at p. 18.

[1] [This is not consistent with his opinion before recorded (*ante*, vol. iii. p. 294), of this lady's work for the instruction of youth.—Ed.]

[2] [Master of Harrow.—Ed.]

Piozzi Anec. length prevailed upon: I know not indeed whether his tenderness was persuaded, or his reason convinced, but the effect will always be the same. Poor Dr. Sumner died, however, before the next vacation.'

"Dr. Johnson was of opinion, too, that young people should have *positive*, not *general* rules given for their direction. 'My mother,' said he, 'was always telling me that I did not *behave* myself properly; that I should endeavour to learn *behaviour*, and such cant: but when I replied, that she ought to tell me what to do, and what to avoid, her admonitions were commonly, for that time at least, at an end.'

p. 19. "This, I fear, was however at best a momentary refuge, found out by perverseness[1]. No man knew better than Johnson in how many nameless and numberless actions *behaviour* consists: actions which can scarcely be reduced to rule, and which come under no description. Of these he retained so many very strange ones, that I suppose no one who saw his odd manner of gesticulating much blamed or wondered at the good lady's solicitude concerning her son's *behaviour*.

"Though he was attentive to the peace of children in general, no man had a stronger contempt than he for such parents as openly profess that they cannot govern their children. 'How,' says he, 'is an army governed? Such people, for the most part, multiply prohibitions till obedience becomes impossible, and authority appears absurd; and never suspect that they tease their family, their friends, and themselves, only because conversation runs low, and something must be said.'

p. 119. "Dr. Johnson's knowledge and esteem of what we call low or coarse life was indeed prodigious; and he

[1] [See *ante*, p. 247.—Ed.]

did not like that the upper ranks should be dignified with the name of *the world.* Sir Joshua Reynolds said one day, that nobody *wore* laced coats now; and that once every body wore them. 'See now,' says Johnson, 'how absurd that is; as if the bulk of mankind consisted of fine gentlemen that came to him to sit for their pictures. If every man who wears a laced coat (that he can pay for) was extirpated, who would miss them?' With all this haughty contempt of gentility, no praise was more welcome to Dr. Johnson than that which said he had the notions or manners of a gentleman: which character I have heard him define with accuracy and describe with elegance. Piozzi Anec.

"I was saying to a friend one day, that I did not like goose; one smells it so while it is roasting, said I. 'But you, madam,' replies the Doctor, 'have been at all times a fortunate woman, having always had your hunger so forestalled by indulgence, that you never experienced the delight of smelling your dinner beforehand.' Which pleasure, answered I, pertly, is to be enjoyed in perfection by such as have the happiness to pass through Porridge-Island[1] of a morning. 'Come, come,' says he gravely, 'let's have no sneering at what is serious to so many: hundreds of your fellow-creatures, dear lady, turn another way, that they may not be tempted by the luxuries of Porridge-Island to wish for gratifications they are not able to obtain: you are certainly not better than all of *them;* give God thanks that you are happier.' p. 79.

[1] Porridge-Island is a mean street in London, filled with cook-shops for the convenience of the poorer inhabitants; the real name of it I know not, but suspect that which it is generally known by, to have been originally a term of derision.—Piozzi. ["It is *not* a *street*, but a paved alley near the church of St. Martin's in the Fields."—*Malone MS.* These are the kind of errors on which Mr. Malone founds his violent censures of Mrs. Piozzi's *inaccuracy*, which he often calls *falsehood;* but the lady may surely be forgiven if she, in her inexperience, calls that a "*mean street*" which the more accurate Malone, probably by personal inspection, found to be a paved alley.—Ed.]

Piozzi Anec. p. 80. "I received on another occasion as just a rebuke from Dr. Johnson, for an offence of the same nature, and hope I took care never to provoke a third; for after a very long summer particularly hot and dry, I was wishing naturally, but thoughtlessly, for some rain to lay the dust as we drove along the Surrey roads. 'I cannot bear,' replied he, with much asperity and an altered look, 'when I know how many poor families will perish next winter for want of that bread which the present drought will deny them, to hear ladies sighing for rain, only that their complexions may not suffer from the heat, or their clothes be incommoded by the dust:—for shame! leave off such foppish lamentations, and study to relieve those whose distresses are real.'

p. 166. "But it was never against people of coarse life that his contempt was expressed, while *poverty of sentiment* in men who considered themselves to be company for *the parlour*, as he called it, was what he would not bear.

p. 221. "Even dress itself, when it resembled that of the vulgar, offended him exceedingly; and when he had condemned me many times for not adorning my children with more show than I thought useful or elegant, I presented a little girl to him who came o'visiting one evening covered with shining ornaments, to see if he would approve of the appearance she made. When they were gone home, 'Well, sir,' said I, 'how did you like miss? I hope she was *fine* enough?' 'It was the finery of a beggar,' said he, 'and you knew it was; she looked like a native of Cow-lane dressed up to be carried to Bartholomew fair.' His reprimand to another lady for crossing her little child's handkerchief before, and by that operation dragging down its head oddly and unintentionally, was on the same principle. 'It is the beggar's fear of cold,' said he, 'that prevails over

such parents, and so they pull the poor thing's head down, and give it the look of a baby that plays about Westminster-bridge, while the mother sits shivering in a niche.' Piozzi Anec.

"My compliances [in his criticisms on dress], however, were of little worth; what really surprised me was the victory he gained over a lady little accustomed to contradiction, who had dressed herself for church at Streatham one Sunday morning, in a manner he did not approve, and to whom he said such sharp and pungent things concerning her hat, her gown, &c. that she hastened to change them, and returning quite another figure received his applause, and thanked him for his reproofs, much to the amazement of her husband, who could scarcely believe his own ears. p. 223.

"Another lady, whose accomplishments he never denied, came to our house one day covered with diamonds, feathers, &c. and he did not seem inclined to chat with her as usual. I asked him why, when the company was gone. 'Why, her head looked so like that of a woman who shows puppets,' said he, 'and her voice so confirmed the fancy, that I could not bear her to-day; when she wears a large cap, I can talk to her.'

"When the ladies wore lace trimmings to their clothes, he expressed his contempt of the reigning fashion in these terms: 'A Brussels trimming is like bread-sauce,' said he, 'it takes away the glow of colour from the gown, and gives you nothing instead of it; but sauce was invented to heighten the flavour of our food, and trimming is an ornament to the manteau, or it is nothing. Learn,' said he, 'that there is propriety or impropriety in every thing how slight soever, and get at the general principles of dress and of behaviour; if you then transgress

Piozzi Anec. them, you will at least know that they are not observed.'

p. 222. "It was indeed astonishing how he *could* remark such minutenesses with a sight so miserably imperfect; but no accidental position of a riband escaped him, so nice was his observation, and so rigorous his demands of propriety.

p. 84. "When he turned his back on Lord Bolingbroke[1] in the rooms at Brighthelmstone, he made this excuse: 'I am not obliged, sir,' said he to Mr. Thrale, who stood by fretting, 'to find reasons for respecting the rank of him who will not condescend to declare it by his dress or some other visible mark: what are stars and other signs of superiority made for?'

p. 224. "All these exactnesses in a man who was nothing less than exact himself, made him extremely impracticable as an inmate, though most instructive as a companion, and useful as a friend. Mr. Thrale, too, could sometimes overrule his rigidity, by saying coldly, 'There, there, now we have had enough for one lecture, Dr. Johnson; we will not be upon education any more till after dinner, if you please;' or some such speech: but when there was nobody to restrain his dislikes, it was extremely difficult to find any body with whom he could converse, without living always on the verge of a quarrel, or of something too like a quarrel to be pleasing. I came into the room, for example, one evening, where he and a gentleman, [Mr. Seward], whose abilities we all respected exceedingly, were sitting; a lady[2] who walked in two

[1] [See *ante*, vol. ii. p. 230. As Lord Bolingbroke did not happen to be a knight of any of the orders, it is not easy to guess how he could have satisfied Dr. Johnson's wishes.—Ed.]

[2] [The lady's name was Streatfield, as Mr. Seward told me. She was very handsome, and a good scholar; for she understood Greek. She was piqued at Mr. Seward's paying more attention to Dr. Johnson than to her; and on coming in, whispered, "how his *bark* sat on his stomach;" alluding to the roughness which she supposed was in Dr. Johnson's conversation.—*Malone MS.*]

minutes before me had blown them both into a flame, by whispering something to Mr. [Seward], which he endeavoured to explain away, so as not to affront the doctor, whose suspicions were all alive. 'And have a care, sir,' said he just as I came in; 'the old lion will not bear to be tickled.' The other was pale with rage, the lady wept at the confusion she had caused, and I could only say with Lady Macbeth, Piozzi Anec. p. 224.

> 'You 've displaced the mirth, broke the good meeting
> With most admired disorder.'

"Two gentlemen, I perfectly well remember, dining with us at Streatham in the summer of 1782, when Elliot's brave defence of Gibraltar was a subject of common discourse, one of these men naturally enough began some talk about red-hot balls thrown with surprising dexterity and effect; which Dr. Johnson having listened some time to, 'I would advise you, sir,' said he, with a cold sneer, 'never to relate this story again; you really can scarce imagine how *very poor* a figure you make in the telling of it.' Our guest being bred a quaker, and, I believe, a man of an extremely gentle disposition, needed no more reproofs for the same folly; so if he ever did speak again, it was in a low voice to the friend who came with him. The check was given before dinner, and after coffee I left the room. When in the evening, however, our companions had returned to London, and Dr. Johnson and myself were left alone, with only our usual family about us, 'I did not quarrel with those quaker fellows,' said he, very seriously. 'You did perfectly right,' replied I; 'for they gave you no cause of offence.' 'No offence!' returned he, with an altered voice; 'and is it nothing then to sit whispering together when *I* am present, without ever directing their discourse p. 106.

Piozzi Anec. p. 106. towards me, or offering me a share in the conversation?' 'That was because you frighted him who spoke first about those hot balls.' 'Why, madam, if a creature is neither capable of giving dignity to falsehood, nor willing to remain contented with the truth, he deserves no better treatment[1].'

p. 107. "Dr. Johnson's fixed incredulity[2] of every thing he heard, and his little care to conceal that incredulity, was teasing enough, to be sure; and I saw Mr. Sharp[3] was pained exceedingly, when relating the history of a hurricane that happened about that time in the West Indies, where, for aught I know, he had himself lost some friends too, he observed Dr. Johnson believed not a syllable of the account. 'For 'tis *so* easy,' says he, 'for a man to fill his mouth with wonder, and run about telling the lie before it can be detected, that I have no heart to believe hurricanes easily raised by the first inventor, and blown forwards by thousands more.' I asked him once if he believed the story of the destruction of Lisbon by an earthquake, when it first happened. 'Oh! not for six months,' said he, 'at least. I *did* think that story too dreadful to be credited, and can hardly yet per-

[1] [Mr. Malone, in his MS. notes, is very indignant that Mrs. Piozzi has omitted to state what the story was which produced this observation, and because she has not done so questions the veracity of the whole anecdote; but this is very unjust. Mrs. Piozzi's object was to exhibit *Johnson's* manners, and not to record the minute details of the quaker's story.—ED.]

[2] [Mr. Malone, in his MS. notes, observes on this passage, "*Here is another* GROSS MISREPRESENTATION. *He had no* fixed incredulity *concerning every thing he heard; but he had observed the great laxity with which almost every story is told, and therefore always examined it accurately, and frequently found some gross exaggeration. The writer herself had not the smallest regard for* truth, *as Johnson told Mr. Boswell (see his Life of Johnson), and hence this scrutinising habit of her guest was to her a very sore subject.*" On this the Editor must take leave to say, that Mr. Malone's observation defeats itself; because if Dr. Johnson's incredulity was a *sore subject* with Mrs. Piozzi, she cannot be blamed for recording it. Mr. Malone might have questioned her *judgment*, in supposing that Johnson was equally incredulous as to other persons, but not her *sincerity*, in describing him as she found him; and if he found *almost every story told with great laxity*, is it surprising that he should have an habitual incredulity?—ED.]

[3] [See *ante*, vol. iii. p. 420.—ED.]

suade myself that it was true to the full extent we all of us have heard.' Piozzi Anec.

"Though thus uncommonly ready both to give and take offence, Dr. Johnson had many rigid maxims concerning the necessity of continued softness and compliance of disposition: and when I once mentioned Shenstone's idea, that some little quarrel among lovers, relations, and friends, was useful, and contributed to their general happiness upon the whole, by making the soul feel her elastic force, and return to the beloved object with renewed delight: 'Why, what a pernicious maxim is this now,' cried Dr. Johnson: '*all* quarrels ought to be avoided studiously, particularly conjugal ones, as no one can possibly tell where they may end; besides that lasting dislike is often the consequence of occasional disgust, and that the cup of life is surely bitter enough, without squeezing in the hateful rind of resentment.' p. 111.

"A very ignorant young fellow, who had plagued us all for nine or ten months, died at last consumptive: 'I think,' said Dr. Johnson, when he heard the news, 'I am afraid I should have been more concerned for the death of the *dog;* but ——' hesitating awhile, 'I am not wrong now in all this, for the dog acted up to his character on every occasion that we know; but that dunce of a fellow helped forward the general disgrace of humanity.' 'Why, dear sir,' said I, 'how odd you are! you have often said the lad was not capable of receiving farther instruction.' 'He was,' replied the doctor, 'like a corked bottle, with a drop of dirty water in it, to be sure; one might pump upon it for ever without the smallest effect; but when every method to open and clean it had been tried [in vain], you would not have me grieve that the bottle was broke at last.' p. 166.

Piozzi Anec. p. 167. "This was the same youth who told us he had been reading Lucius Florus; *Florus Delphini* was the phrase: and, 'my mother,' said he, 'thought it had something to do with Delphos; but of that I know nothing.' 'Who founded Rome then?' inquired Mr. Thrale. The lad replied, 'Romulus.' 'And who succeeded Romulus?' said I. A long pause, and apparently distressful hesitation, followed the difficult question. 'Why will you ask him in terms that he does not comprehend?' said Dr. Johnson, enraged. 'You might as well bid him tell you who phlebotomized Romulus. This fellow's dulness is elastic,' continued he, 'and all we do is but like kicking at a woolsack.' The pains he took however to obtain the young man more patient instructors were many, and oftentimes repeated. He was put under the care of a clergyman in a distant province; and Dr. Johnson used both to write and talk to his friend concerning his education.

p. 156. "A young fellow, less confident of his own abilities, lamenting one day that he had lost all his Greek—'I believe it happened at the same time, sir,' said Johnson, 'that I lost all my large estate in Yorkshire.'

p. 72. "Of a Jamaica gentleman, then lately dead, he said—'He will not, whither he is now gone, find much difference, I believe, either in the climate or the company.'

p. 189. "Returning home one day from dining at the chaplains' table[1], he told me, that Dr. Goldsmith had given a very comical and unnecessarily exact recital there of his own feelings when his play was hissed; telling the company how he went indeed to the Literary Club at night, and chatted gaily among his friends, as if nothing had happened amiss; that to

[1] [At St. James's palace.—Ed.]

impress them still more forcibly with an idea of his magnanimity, he even sung his favourite song about *'an old woman tossed in a blanket seventeen times as high as the moon;'* 'but all this while I was suffering horrid tortures,' said he, 'and verily believe that if I had put a bit into my mouth it would have strangled me on the spot, I was so excessively ill; but I made more noise than usual to cover all that; and so they never perceived my not eating, nor I believe at all imaged to themselves the anguish of my heart: but when all were gone except Johnson here, I burst out a-crying, and even *swore* that I would never write again.' 'All which, doctor,' said Dr. Johnson, amazed at his odd frankness, 'I thought had been a secret between you and me; and I am sure I would not have said any thing about it for the world. Now see,' repeated he when he told the story, 'what a figure a man makes who thus unaccountably chooses to be the frigid narrator of his own disgrace. *Il volto sciolto, ed i pensieri stretti,* was a proverb made on purpose for such mortals, to keep people, if possible, from being thus the heralds of their own shame: for what compassion can they gain by such silly narratives? No man should be expected to sympathize with the sorrows of vanity. If then you are mortified by any ill usage, whether real or supposed, keep at least the account of such mortifications to yourself, and forbear to proclaim how meanly you are thought on by others, unless you desire to be meanly thought of by all.'

Piozzi Anec. p. 190.

"Poor Goldsmith was to him indeed like the earthen pot to the iron one in Fontaine's fables; it had been better for *him*, perhaps, that they had changed companions oftener; yet no experience of his antagonist's strength hindered him from continuing the contest. He used to remind me always of that verse in Berni,

p. 138.

Piozzi Anec. p. 139.

'Il pover uomo che non sen' era accorto,
Andava combattendo—ed era morto.'

"Dr. Johnson made him a comical answer one day, when seeming to repine at the success of Beattie's Essay on Truth. 'Here's such a stir,' said he, 'about a fellow that has written one book, and I have written many.' 'Ah, doctor,' said his friend, 'there go two-and-forty sixpences, you know, to one guinea.'

p. 30. "Garrick said to Dr. Johnson one day, 'Why did not you make me a tory, when we lived so much together? you love to make people tories.' 'Why,' said Johnson, pulling a heap of half-pence from his pocket, 'did not the king make these—guineas?'

p. 157. "But however roughly he might be suddenly provoked to treat a harmless exertion of vanity, he did not wish to inflict the pain he gave, and was sometimes very sorry when he perceived the people to smart more than they deserved. 'How harshly you treated that man to-day,' said I once, 'who harangued us so about gardening!' 'I am sorry,' said he, 'if I vexed the creature, for there certainly is no harm in a fellow's rattling a *rattle-box;* only don't let him think that he *thunders.*'

p. 119. "We were speaking of a gentleman who loved his friend—'Make him prime minister,' said Johnson, 'and see how long his friend will be remembered.' But he had a rougher answer for me, when I commended a sermon preached by an intimate acquaintance of our own at the trading end of the town. 'What was the subject, madam?' said Dr. Johnson. 'Friendship, sir,' replied I. 'Why now, is it not strange that a wise man, like our dear little Evans, should take it in his head to preach on such a subject, in a place where no one can be thinking of it?' 'Why, what are they thinking upon, sir?' said I.

'Why, the men are thinking on their money, I suppose, and the women are thinking of their mops.' Piozzi Anec.

"I have mentioned before, that old age had very little of Dr. Johnson's reverence: 'A man commonly grew wickeder as he grew older,' he said, 'at least he but changed the vices of youth, headstrong passion and wild temerity, for treacherous caution and desire to circumvent. I am always,' said he, 'on the young people's side, when there is a dispute between them and the old ones; for you have at least a chance for virtue till age has withered its very root.' While we were talking, my mother's spaniel, whom he never loved, stole our toast and butter: 'Fie, Belle!' said I, 'you used to be upon honour.' 'Yes, madam,' replied Johnson, '*but Belle grows old.*' His reason for hating the dog was, 'because she was a professed favourite,' he said, 'and because her lady ordered her from time to time to be washed and combed: a foolish trick,' said he, 'and an assumption of superiority that every one's nature revolts at; so because one must not wish ill to the lady in such cases,' continued he, 'one curses the cur.' The truth is, Belle was not well-behaved, and being a large spaniel, was troublesome enough at dinner with frequent solicitations to be fed. 'This animal,' said Dr. Johnson, one day, 'would have been of extraordinary merit and value in the state of Lycurgus; for she condemns one to the exertion of perpetual vigilance.' p. 197.

"Though apt enough to take sudden likings or aversions to people he occasionally met, he would never hastily pronounce upon their character; and when, seeing him justly delighted with Dr. Solander's[1] conversation, I observed once that he was a man of p. 150.

[1] [See *ante*, vol. iii. p. 23.—Ed.]

Piozzi Anec. great parts, who talked from a full mind—'It may be so,' said Dr. Johnson, 'but you cannot know it yet, nor I neither: the pump works well, to be sure; but how, I wonder, are we to decide in so very short an acquaintance, whether it is supplied by a *spring* or a *reservoir*?'

"He always made a great difference in his esteem between talents and erudition; and when he saw a person eminent for literature, wholly unconversable, it fretted him. 'Teaching such tonies,' said he to me one day, 'is like setting a lady's diamonds in lead, which only obscures the lustre of the stone, and makes the possessor ashamed on 't.'

p. 108. "Among the numberless people, however, whom I heard him grossly and flatly contradict, I never yet saw any one who did not take it patiently excepting Dr. Burney, from whose habitual softness of manners I little expected such an exertion of spirit: the event was as little to be expected. Dr. Johnson asked his pardon generously and genteelly, and when he left the room rose up to shake hands with him, that they might part in peace.

p. 158. "When Dr. Johnson had a mind to compliment any one, he did it with more dignity to himself, and better effect upon the company, than any man. I can recollect but few instances indeed, though perhaps that may be more my fault than his. When Sir Joshua Reynolds left the room one day, he said, 'There goes a man not to be spoiled by prosperity.'

"He was not at all offended, when, comparing all our acquaintance to some animal or other, we pitched upon the elephant for his resemblance, adding, that the proboscis of that creature was like his mind most exactly—strong to buffet even the tiger, and pliable to pick up even the pin. The truth is, Dr. Johnson was often good-humouredly willing to join in childish

amusements, and hated to be left out of any innocent merriment that was going forward. He liked a frolic or a jest well enough; though he had strange serious rules about it too: and very angry was he if any body offered to be merry when he was disposed to be grave. 'You have an ill-founded notion,' said he, 'that it is clever to turn matters off with a joke, as the phrase is; whereas nothing produces enmity so certain, as one person's showing a disposition to be merry when another is inclined to be either serious or displeased.' Piozzi Anec. p. 89.

"I likewise remember that he pronounced one day at my house a most lofty panegyric upon Jones[1], the orientalist, who seemed little pleased with the praise, for what cause I know not. p. 158.

"An Irish trader at our house one day heard Dr. Johnson launch out into very great and greatly-deserved praises of Mr. Edmund Burke: delighted to find his countryman stood so high in the opinion of a man he had been told so much of, 'Sir,' said he, 'give *me* leave to tell something of Mr. Burke now.' We were all silent, and the honest Hibernian began to relate how Mr. Burke went to see the collieries in a distant province: 'and he would go down into the bowels of the earth (in a bag), and he would examine every thing; he went in a bag, sir, and ventured his health and his life for knowledge; but he took care of his clothes, that they should not be spoiled, for he went down in a bag.' 'Well, sir,' said Dr. Johnson, good-humouredly, 'if our friend Mund should die in any of these hazardous exploits, you and I would write his life and panegyric together; and your chapter of it should be entitled thus—*Burke in a bag*.' p. 186.

[1] [Sir William Jones.—Ed.]

Piozzi Anec. p. 62. "Mr. Thrale was one time extolling the character of a statesman, and expatiating on the skill required to direct the different currents, reconcile the jarring interests, &c. 'Thus,' replied Johnson, 'a mill is a complicated piece of mechanism enough, but the water is no part of the workmanship.'

"On another occasion, when some one lamented the weakness of the then minister, and complained that he was dull and tardy, and knew little of affairs —'You may as well complain, sir,' said Johnson, 'that the accounts of time are kept by the clock; for he certainly does stand still upon the stair-head—and we all know that he is no great chronologer.'

p. 37. "He told me that the character of *Sober* in the 'Idler' was by himself intended as his own portrait; and that he had his own outset into life in his eye when he wrote the eastern story of Gelaleddin.

p. 46. "Of a much-admired poem, when extolled as beautiful, he replied, 'That it had indeed the beauty of a bubble: the colours are gay,' said he, 'but the substance slight.'

p. 59. "When Dr. Johnson felt, or fancied he felt, his fancy disordered, his constant recurrence was to the study of arithmetic: and one day that he was totally confined to his chamber, and I inquired what he had been doing to divert himself, he showed me a calculation which I could scarce be made to understand, so vast was the plan of it, and so very intricate were the figures; no other indeed than that the national debt, computing it at one hundred and eighty millions sterling, would, if converted into silver, serve to make a meridian of that metal, I forget how broad, for the globe of the whole earth, the real *globe*.

p. 145. "I told him of a friend who suffered grievously with the gout. 'He will live a vast many years for all that,' replied he, 'and then what signifies how

much he suffers? but he will die at last, poor fellow, there's the misery; gout seldom takes the fort by a *coup-de-main*, but turning the siege into a *blockade*, obliges it to surrender at discretion.' Piozzi Anec.

"A lady he thought well of was disordered in her health. 'What help has she called in?' inquired Johnson. 'Dr. James, sir,' was the reply. 'What is her disease?' 'Oh, nothing positive; rather a gradual and gentle decline.' 'She will die then, pretty dear!' answered he: 'when death's pale horse runs away with a person on full speed, an active physician may possibly give them a turn; but if he carries them on an even slow pace, down hill too, no care nor skill can save them!'

"Sir William Browne, the physician, who lived to a very extraordinary age [1], and was in other respects an odd mortal, with more genius than understanding, and more self-sufficiency than wit, was the only person who ventured to oppose Dr. Johnson, when he had a mind to shine by exalting his favourite university, and to express his contempt of the whiggish notions which prevail at Cambridge. *He* did it once, however, with surprising felicity: his antagonist having repeated with an air of triumph the famous epigram written by Dr. Trapp, p. 29.

> 'Our royal master saw, with heedful eyes,
> The wants of his two universities:
> Troops he to Oxford sent, as knowing why
> That learned body wanted loyalty:
> But books to Cambridge gave, as, well discerning,
> That that right loyal body wanted learning.'

Which, says Sir William, might well be answered thus:

[1] [He died in March 1774, at the age of eighty-two. It is nowhere stated, that the editor knows of, that this epigram was made extemporaneously on a provocation from Dr. Johnson. See an account of Sir William Browne, and a more accurate version of the two epigrams, in the Biog. Dict.—ED.]

Piozzi Anec. p. 30.

'The king to Oxford sent his troop of horse,
For tories own no argument but force;
With equal care to Cambridge books he sent,
For whigs allow no force but argument.'

"Dr. Johnson did him the justice to say, it was one of the happiest extemporaneous productions he ever met with; though he once comically confessed, that he hated to repeat the wit of a whig urged in support of whiggism.

p. 191. "When Sir Joshua Reynolds had painted his portrait looking into the slit of his pen, and holding it almost close to his eye, as was his general custom, he felt displeased, and told me, 'he would not be known by posterity for his *defects* only, let Sir Joshua do his worst.' I said in reply, that Reynolds had no such difficulties about himself, and that he might observe the picture which hung up in the room where we were talking represented Sir Joshua holding his ear in his hand to catch the sound. 'He may paint himself as deaf if he chooses,' replied Johnson; 'but I will not be *blinking Sam.*'

p. 161. "As we had been saying one day that no subject failed of receiving dignity from the manner in which Dr. Johnson treated it, a lady at our house said, she would make him talk about *love*, and took her measures accordingly, deriding the novels of the day because they treated about love. 'It is not,' replied our philosopher, 'because they treat, as you call it, about *love*, but because they treat of *nothing*, that they are despicable: we must not ridicule a passion which he who never felt never was happy, and he who laughs at never deserves to feel—a passion which has caused the change of empires, and the loss of worlds—a passion which has inspired heroism and subdued avarice.' He thought he had already said too much. 'A passion, in short,' added he,

with an altered tone, 'that consumes me away for my pretty Fanny[1] here, and she is very cruel.' Piozzi Anec.

"As Johnson was the firmest of believers without being credulous, so he was the most charitable of mortals without being what we call an active friend[2]. Admirable at giving counsel, no man saw his way so clearly; but he would not stir a finger for the assistance of those to whom he was willing enough to give advice: besides that, he had principles of laziness, and could be indolent by rule. To hinder your death, or procure you a dinner—I mean, if really in want of one—his earnestness, his exertions, could not be prevented, though health, and purse, and ease were all destroyed by their violence. If you wanted a slight favour, you must apply to people of other dispositions; for not a step would Johnson move to obtain a man a vote in a society, or repay a compliment, which might be useful or pleasing, to write a letter of request, or to obtain a hundred pounds a year more for a friend, who, perhaps, had already two or three. No force could urge him to diligence, no importunity could conquer his resolution of standing still. 'What good are we doing with all this ado?' would he say: 'dearest lady, let's hear no more of it!' I have, however, more than once in my life forced him on such services, but with extreme difficulty. We parted at his door one evening when I had teased him for many weeks to write a recommendatory letter of a little boy to his schoolmaster; and after he had faithfully promised to do this prodigious feat before we met again—'Do not forget dear Dick, sir,' said I, as he went out of the coach. He turned back, stood still two minutes on the carriage-step— p. 149.

[1] [Miss Burney, the author of Evelina, &c. now Madame D'Arblay.—Ed.]

[2] [See *post*, *sub* June, 1784.—Ed.]

Piozzi Anec. 'When I have written my letter for Dick, I may hang myself, mayn't I?' and turned away in a very ill humour indeed.

p. 174. "The strangest applications in the world were certainly made from time to time towards Dr. Johnson, who by that means had an inexhaustible fund of anecdote, and could, if he pleased, tell the most astonishing stories of human folly and human weakness that ever were confided to any man not a confessor by profession.

"One day, when he was in a humour to record some of them, he told us the following tale: 'A person,' said he, 'had for these last five weeks often called at my door, but would not leave his name, or other message, but that he wished to speak with me. At last we met, and he told me that he was oppressed by scruples of conscience. I blamed him gently for not applying, as the rules of our church direct, to his parish priest, or other discreet clergyman; when, after some compliments on his part, he told me, that he was clerk to a very eminent trader, at whose warehouses much business consisted in packing goods in order to go abroad: that he was often tempted to take paper and packthread enough for his own use, and that he had indeed done so so often, that he could recollect no time when he ever had bought any for himself. 'But probably,' said I, 'your master was wholly indifferent with regard to such trivial emoluments; you had better ask for it at once, and so take your trifles with consent.' 'Oh, sir!' replied the visitor, 'my master bid me have as much as I pleased, and was half angry when I talked to him about it.' 'Then pray, sir,' said I, 'tease me no more about such airy nothings;' and was going on to be very angry, when I recollected that the fellow might be mad perhaps; so I asked him when he

left the counting-house of an evening? 'At seven o'clock, sir.' 'And when do you go to bed, sir?' 'At twelve o'clock.' 'Then,' replied I, 'I have at least learned thus much by my new acquaintance—that five hours of the four-and-twenty unemployed are enough for a man to go mad in: so I would advise you, sir, to study algebra, if you are not an adept already in it: your head would get less *muddy*, and you will leave off tormenting your neighbours about paper and packthread, while we all live together in a world that is bursting with sin and sorrow.' It is perhaps needless to add that this visitor came no more. Dr. Johnson had a real abhorrence of any one who ever treated a little thing like a great one, and very often quoted this scrupulous gentleman with his packthread. Piozzi Anec. p. 175.

"A man for whom he often begged made, as he told us, a wild use of his beneficence, spending in punch the solitary guinea which had been brought him one morning: when resolving to add another claimant to a share of the bowl, besides a woman who always lived with him, and a footman who used to carry out petitions for charity, he borrowed a chairman's watch, and pawning it for half a crown, paid a clergyman to marry him to a fellow-lodger in the wretched house they all inhabited, and got so drunk over the guinea bowl of punch the evening of his wedding-day, that having many years lost the use of one leg, he now contrived to fall from the top of the stairs to the bottom, and break his arm, in which condition his companions left him to call Dr. Johnson, who relating the series of his tragi-comical distresses, obtained from the Literary Club a seasonable relief. p. 92.

"Dr. Johnson did not, however, much delight in that kind of conversation which consists in telling p. 133.

Piozzi Anec. p. 133. stories. 'Every body,' said he, 'tells stories of me, and I tell stories of nobody. I do not recollect,' added he, 'that I have ever told *you*, that have been always favourites, above three stories; but I hope I do not play the old fool, and force people to hear uninteresting narratives, only because I once was diverted with them myself.'

p. 235. "Though at an immeasurable distance from content in the contemplation of his own uncouth form and figure, he did not like another man much the less for being a coxcomb. I mentioned two friends[1] who were particularly fond of looking at themselves in a glass—'They do not surprise me at all by so doing,' said Johnson: 'they see, reflected in that glass, men who have risen from almost the lowest situations in life; one to enormous riches, the other to every thing this world can give—rank, fame, and fortune. They see likewise men who have merited their advancement by the exertion and improvement of those talents which God had given them; and I see not why they should avoid the mirror.'"

This year the Reverend Dr. Franklin having published a translation of "Lucian," inscribed to him the *Demonax* thus:

"To Dr. Samuel Johnson, the Demonax of the present age, this piece is inscribed by a sincere admirer of his respectable talents,

"THE TRANSLATOR."

Though upon a particular comparison of Demonax and Johnson, there does not seem to be a great deal

[1] ["These two friends were John Cator, a timber-merchant in the Borough, and Wedderburn, Lord Loughborough."—*Piozzi MS.*—ED.]

of similarity between them [1], this dedication is a just compliment from the general character given by Lucian of the ancient sage, "αριστον ων οιδα εγω φιλοσοφων γενομενον, the best philosopher whom I have ever seen or known."

In 1781, Johnson at last completed his "Lives of the Poets," of which he gives this account: "Some time in March I finished the 'Lives of the Poets,' which I wrote in my usual way, dilatorily and hastily, unwilling to work, and working with vigour and haste." Pr. and Med. p. 190.

["This facility of writing, and this dilatoriness to write, Dr. Johnson," says Mrs. Piozzi, "always retained, from the days that he lay a-bed and dictated his first publication to Mr. Hector, who acted as his amanuensis, to the moment he made me copy out those variations in Pope's Homer which are printed in the *Lives of the Poets* [2]. 'And now,' said he, when I had finished it for him, 'I fear not Mr. Nichols [3] [the printer] a pin.'"] Piozzi, p. 36.

In a memorandum previous to this, he says of them: "Written, I hope, in such a manner as may tend to the promotion of piety." Pr. and Med. p. 174.

This is the work which, of all Dr. Johnson's writings, will perhaps be read most generally, and with most pleasure. Philology and biography were his favourite pursuits, and those who lived most in intimacy with him, heard him upon all occasions, when there was a

[1] [There were, no doubt, some points in which Johnson did not resemble Demonax, who was high-born and rich, very mild in his manners, gentle in argument and even in his reprimands, and lived to a great age in uninterrupted health; but in many particulars Lucian's character seems very curiously applicable to Johnson; and indeed his tract resembles (in little) Boswell's own work, being a collection of observations on several topics, moral, critical, and religious, made by a philosopher of strong sense, ready wit, and fearless veracity; and the character which Lucian ascribes to the conversation of Demonax appears to the editor very like (making due allowance for the difference of ancient and modern habits and topics) the style of that of Dr. Johnson's.—Ed.]

[2] [The first *livraison* was published in 1779. This edition of the Poets was in sixty vols. 12mo.—Ed.]

[3] [This name is misprinted *Nicholson* in Mrs. Piozzi's *Anecdotes*.—Ed.]

proper opportunity, take delight in expatiating upon the various merits of the English poets: upon the niceties of their characters, and the events of their progress through the world which they contributed to illuminate. His mind was so full of that kind of information, and it was so well arranged in his memory, that in performing what he had undertaken in this way, he had little more to do than to put his thoughts upon paper; exhibiting first each poet's life, and then subjoining a critical examination of his genius and works. But when he began to write, the subject swelled in such a manner, that instead of prefaces to each poet, of no more than a few pages, as he had originally intended [1], he produced an ample, rich, and most entertaining view of them in every respect. In this he resembled Quintilian, who tells us, that in the composition of his "Institutions of Oratory," "*Latiùs se tamen aperiente materiâ, plus quàm imponebatur oneris sponte suscepi.*" The booksellers, justly sensible of the great additional value of the copyright, presented him with another hundred pounds, over and above two hundred, for which his agreement was to furnish such prefaces as he thought fit.

Gent. Mag. v. lxxxii. part ii. p. 54.

["The bargain," as Mr. Nichols states, "was for two hundred guineas, and the booksellers spontaneously added a *third* hundred; on this occasion Dr. Johnson observed to Mr. Nichols, 'Sir, I always said the booksellers were a generous set of men. Nor, in the present instance, have I reason to complain. The fact is, not that they have paid me too little,

[1] His design is thus announced in his advertisement: "The booksellers having determined to publish a body of English poetry, I was persuaded to promise them a preface to the works of each authour; an undertaking, as it was then presented to my mind, not very tedious or difficult. My purpose was only to have allotted to every poet an advertisement, like that which we find in the 'French Miscellanies,' containing a few dates, and a general character; but I have been led beyond my intention, I hope by the honest desire of giving useful pleasure."—BOSWELL.

but that I have written too much.' The 'Lives' were soon published in a separate edition; when, for a very few corrections, the doctor was presented with another hundred guineas."]

This was, however, but a small recompense for such a collection of biography, and such principles and illustrations of criticism, as, if digested and arranged in one system, by some modern Aristotle or Longinus, might form a code upon that subject, such as no other nation can show. As he was so good as to make me a present of the greatest part of the original, and indeed only manuscript of this admirable work, I have an opportunity of observing with wonder the correctness with which he rapidly struck off such glowing composition. He may be assimilated to the lady in Waller, who could impress with "love at first sight:"

> "Some other nymphs with colours faint,
> And pencil slow, may Cupid paint,
> And a weak heart in time destroy;
> She has a stamp, and prints the boy."

That he, however, had a good deal of trouble [1], and some anxiety in carrying on the work, we see from a series of letters to Mr. Nichols, the printer, whose variety of literary inquiry and obliging disposition rendered him useful to Johnson. Thus:

"In the Life of Waller, Mr. Nichols will find a reference to the Parliamentary History, from which a long quotation is to be inserted. If Mr. Nichols cannot easily find the book, Mr. Johnson will send it from Streatham.

"Clarendon is here returned.

[1] [The reader has, however, seen some instances, and many others might be produced, in which Dr. Johnson, when he published a new edition, utterly disregarded the corrections of errors of which he was apprised. The truth is, he began the work as a thing that might be done in a few weeks, and was surprised and fatigued at the length to which he found it expand: and it is not wonderful that at so advanced an age he was not very anxious to purchase minute accuracy by the labour of revision.—Ed.]

"By some accident I laid *your* note upon Duke up so safely, that I cannot find it. Your informations have been of great use to me. I must beg it again, with another list of our authours, for I have laid that with the other. I have sent Stepney's Epitaph. Let me have the revises as soon as can be. Dec. 1778.

"I have sent Philips, with his Epitaphs, to be inserted. The fragment of a preface is hardly worth the impression, but that we may seem to do something. It may be added to the Life of Philips. The Latin page is to be added to the Life of Smith. I shall be at home to revise the two sheets of Milton. March 1, 1779.

"Please to get me the last edition of Hughes's Letters; and try to get Dennis upon Blackmore and upon Cato, and any thing of the same writer against Pope. Our materials are defective.

"As Waller professed to have imitated Fairfax, do you think a few pages of Fairfax would enrich our edition? Few readers have seen it, and it may please them. But it is not necessary.

"An Account of the Lives and Works of some of the most eminent English Poets, by, &c. 'The English Poets, biographically and critically considered, by Sam. Johnson.' Let Mr. Nichols take his choice, or make another to his mind. May, 1781.

"You somehow forgot the advertisement for the new edition. It was not inclosed. Of Gay's Letters I see not that any use can be made, for they give no information of any thing. That he was a member of a philosophical society is something; but surely he could be but a corresponding member. However, not having his life here, I know not how to put it in, and it is of little importance[1]."

Mr. Steevens appears, from the papers in my possession, to have supplied him with some anecdotes and quotations; and I observe the fair hand[2] of Mrs. Thrale as one of his copyists of select passages. But he was principally indebted to my steady friend,

[1] See several more in "The Gentleman's Magazine," 1785. The editor of that miscellany, in which Johnson wrote for several years, seems justly to think that every fragment of so great a man is worthy of being preserved.—BOSWELL.

[2] [A *fair hand*, in more than one sense—her writing is an almost perfect specimen of calligraphy; and this power remained unimpaired to the last years of her long life.—ED.]

Mr. Isaac Reed, of Staple-inn, whose extensive and accurate knowledge of English literary history I do not express with exaggeration, when I say it is wonderful; indeed his labours have proved it to the world; and all who have the pleasure of his acquaintance can bear testimony to the frankness of his communications in private society.

It is not my intention to dwell upon each of Johnson's "Lives of the Poets," or attempt an analysis of their merits, which, were I able to do it, would take up too much room in this work; yet I shall make a few observations upon some of them, and insert a few various readings.

The Life of Cowley he himself considered as the best of the whole, on account of the dissertation which it contains on the *Metaphysical Poets*. [And he also gave it the preference as containing a nicer investigation and discrimination of the characteristics of *wit*, than is elsewhere to be found.] Dryden, whose critical abilities were equal to his poetical, had mentioned them in his excellent Dedication of his Juvenal, but had barely mentioned them. Johnson has exhibited them at large, with such happy illustration from their writings, and in so luminous a manner, that indeed he may be allowed the full merit of novelty, and to have discovered to us, as it were, a new planet in the poetical hemisphere. Hawk. p. 538.

It is remarked by Johnson, in considering the works of a poet[1], that "amendments are seldom made without some token of a rent;" but I do not find that this is applicable to prose[2]. We shall see that though his amendments in this work are for the better, there is nothing of the *pannus assutus;* the

[1] Life of Sheffield.—BOSWELL.

[2] See, however, p. 9 of this volume, where the same remark is made, and Johnson is there speaking of *prose*. In his Life of Dryden, his observations on the opera of "King Arthur" furnish a striking instance of the truth of this remark.—MALONE.

texture is uniform; and indeed, what had been there at first, is very seldom unfit to have remained.

VARIOUS READINGS[1] IN THE LIFE OF COWLEY.

"All [future votaries of] *that may hereafter pant for* solitude.

"To conceive and execute the [agitation or perception] *pains and the pleasures* of other minds.

"The wide effulgence of [the blazing] *a summer* noon."

In the Life of Waller, Johnson gives a distinct and animated narrative of publick affairs in that variegated period, with strong yet nice touches of character; and having a fair opportunity to display his political principles, does it with an unqualified manly confidence, and satisfies his readers how nobly he might have executed a *Tory History* of his country.

So easy is his style in these Lives, that I do not recollect more than three uncommon or learned words: one, when giving an account of the approach of Waller's mortal disease, he says, "he found his legs grow *tumid*;" by using the expression his legs *swelled*, he would have avoided this; and there would have been no impropriety in its being followed by the interesting question to his physician, "What that *swelling* meant?" Another, when he mentions that Pope had *emitted* proposals; when *published* or *issued* would have been more readily understood; and a third, when he calls Orrery and Dr. Delaney writers both undoubtedly *veracious*; when *true*, *honest*, or *faithful*, might have been used. Yet, it must be owned, that none of these are *hard* or *too big* words; that custom would make them seem as easy as any others; and that a language is richer

[1] The original reading is enclosed in brackets, and the present one is printed in italicks.—BOSWELL.

and capable of more beauty of expression, by having a greater variety of synonymes.

His dissertation upon the unfitness of poetry for the awful subjects of our holy religion, though I do not entirely agree with him, has all the merit of originality, with uncommon force and reasoning.

VARIOUS READINGS IN THE LIFE OF WALLER.

"Consented to [the insertion of their names] *their own nomination.*

"[After] *paying* a fine of ten thousand pounds.

"Congratulating Charles the Second on his [coronation] *recovered right.*

"He that has flattery ready for all whom the vicissitudes of the world happen to exalt, must be [confessed to degrade his powers] *scorned as a prostituted mind.*

"The characters by which Waller intended to distinguish his writings are [elegance] *sprightliness* and dignity.

"Blossoms to be valued only as they [fetch] *foretell* fruits.

"Images such as the superficies of nature [easily] *readily* supplies.

"[His] *Some* applications [are sometimes] *may be thought* too remote and unconsequential.

"His images are [sometimes confused] *not always distinct.*"

Against his Life of Milton, the hounds of whiggism have opened in full cry. But of Milton's great excellence as a poet, where shall we find such a blazon as by the hand of Johnson? I shall select only the following passage concerning "Paradise Lost:"

"Fancy can hardly forbear to conjecture with what temper Milton surveyed the silent progress of his work, and marked his reputation stealing its way in

a kind of subterraneous current, through fear and silence. I cannot but conceive him calm and confident, little disappointed, not at all dejected, relying on his own merit with steady consciousness, and waiting, without impatience, the vicissitudes of opinion, and the impartiality of a future generation."

Indeed even Dr. Towers, who may be considered as one of the warmest zealots of *The Revolution Society* itself, allows, that "Johnson has spoken in the highest terms of the abilities of that great poet, and has bestowed on his principal poetical compositions the most honourable encomiums [1]."

That a man, who venerated the church and monarchy as Johnson did, should speak with a just abhorrence of Milton as a politician, or rather as a daring foe to good polity, was surely to be expected; and to those who censure him, I would recommend his commentary on Milton's celebrated complaint of his situation, when by the lenity of Charles the Second, "a lenity of which," as Johnson well observes, "the world has had perhaps no other example, he, who had written in justification of the murder of his sovereign, was safe under an *Act of Oblivion*." "No sooner is he safe than he finds himself in danger, *fallen on evil days and evil tongues, with darkness and with dangers compassed round.* This darkness,

[1] See "An Essay on the Life, Character, and Writings of Dr. Samuel Johnson," London, 1787; which is very well written, making a proper allowance for the democratical bigotry of its authour: whom I cannot however but admire for his liberality in speaking thus of my illustrious friend:—"He possessed extraordinary powers of understanding, which were much cultivated by study, and still more by meditation and reflection. His memory was remarkably retentive, his imagination uncommonly vigorous, and his judgment keen and penetrating. He had a strong sense of the importance of religion; his piety was sincere, and sometimes ardent; and his zeal for the interests of virtue was often manifested in his conversation and in his writings. The same energy which was displayed in his literary productions was exhibited also in his conversation, which was various, striking, and instructive; and perhaps no man ever equalled him for nervous and pointed repartees. His Dictionary, his Moral Essays, and his productions in polite literature, will convey useful instruction, and elegant entertainment, as long as the language in which they are written shall be understood."—Boswell.

had his eyes been better employed, had undoubtedly deserved compassion; but to add the mention of danger was ungrateful and unjust. He was fallen, indeed, on *evil days;* the time was come in which regicides could no longer boast their wickedness. But of *evil tongues* for Milton to complain, required impudence at least equal to his other powers; Milton, whose warmest advocates must allow, that he never spared any asperity of reproach, or brutality of insolence."

I have, indeed, often wondered how Milton, "an acrimonious and surly republican [1],"—"a man who in his domestick relations was so severe and arbitrary [2]," and whose head was filled with the hardest and most dismal tenets of Calvinism, should have been such a poet; should not only have written with sublimity, but with beauty, and even gaiety; should have exquisitely painted the sweetest sensations of which our nature is capable; imaged the delicate raptures of connubial love; nay, seemed to be animated with all the spirit of revelry. It is a proof that in the human mind the departments of judgment and imagination, perception and temper, may sometimes be divided by strong partitions; and that the light and shade in the same character may be kept so distinct as never to be blended [3].

[Mr. Nichols, whose attachment to his illustrious friend was unwearied, showed him, in 1780, a book called *Remarks on Johnson's Life of Milton*, in which the affair of Lauder was renewed with virulence, and a *poetical scale* in the Literary Magazine, 1758 (when Johnson had ceased to write in that col- Murph. Essay, p. 66.

[1] Johnson's Life of Milton.—Boswell.
[2] Ibid.—Boswell.
[3] Mr. Malone thinks it is rather a proof that he felt nothing of those cheerful sensations which he has described: that on these topicks it is the *poet*, and not the *man*, that writes.—Boswell.

Murph. Essay, p. 66. lection), was urged as an additional proof of deliberate malice. He read the libellous passage with attention, and instantly wrote on the margin: "In the business of Lauder I was deceived, partly by thinking the man too frantic to be fraudulent. Of the *poetical scale*, quoted from the Magazine, I am not the authour. I fancy it was put in after I had quitted that work; for I not only did not write it, but I do not remember it."]

In the Life of Milton, Johnson took occasion to maintain his own and the general opinion of the excellence of rhyme over blank verse, in English poetry; and quotes this apposite illustration of it by "an ingenious critick," that *it seems to be verse only to the eye*[1]. The gentleman whom he thus characterises is (as he told Mr. Seward) Mr. Lock, of Norbury Park, in Surrey, whose knowledge and taste in the fine arts is universally celebrated; with whose elegance of manners the writer of the present work has felt himself much impressed, and to whose virtues a common friend, who has known him long, and is not much addicted to flattery, gives the highest testimony.

VARIOUS READINGS IN THE LIFE OF MILTON.

"I cannot find any meaning but this which [his most bigoted advocates] *even kindness and reverence* can give.

"[Perhaps no] *scarcely any* man ever wrote so much, and praised so few.

"A certain [rescue] *preservative* from oblivion.

"Let me not be censured for this digression, as [contracted] *pedantick* or paradoxical.

"Socrates rather was of opinion, that what we had

[1] One of the most natural instances of the effect of blank verse occurred to the late Earl of Hopeton. His lordship observed one of his shepherds poring in the fields upon Milton's "Paradise Lost;" and having asked him what book it was, the man answered, "An't please your lordship, this is a very odd sort of an authour: he would fain rhyme, but cannot get at it."—BOSWELL.

to learn was how to [obtain and communicate happiness] *do good and avoid evil.*

"Its elegance [who can exhibit?] *is less attainable.*"

I could, with pleasure, expatiate upon the masterly execution of the life of Dryden, which we have seen[1] was one of Johnson's literary projects at an early period, and which it is remarkable, that after desisting from it, from a supposed scantiness of materials, he should, at an advanced age, have exhibited so amply.

[Though Johnson had the highest opinion of Pope[2] as a writer, his superior reverence for Dryden notwithstanding still appeared in his talk as in his writings; and when some one mentioned the ridicule thrown on him in the "Rehearsal," as having hurt his general character as an author, "On the contrary," says Dr. Johnson, "the greatness of Dryden's reputation is now the only principle of vitality which keeps the Duke of Buckingham's play from putrefaction." Piozzi, p. 43.

It was not very easy however for people not quite intimate with Dr. Johnson, to get exactly his opinion of a writer's merit, as though he would sometimes divert himself by confounding those who thought themselves safe to say to-morrow what he had said yesterday; and even Garrick, who ought to have been better acquainted with his tricks, professed himself mortified, that one time when he was extolling Dryden in a rapture that perhaps disgusted his friend, Dr. Johnson suddenly challenged him to produce twenty lines in a series that would not dis-

[1] See vol. iii. p. 434.—Boswell.

[2] ["When a lady at Mr. Thrale's talked of his preface to Shakspeare as superior to Pope's, he said, 'I fear not, madam: the little fellow has done wonders.'"—*Anecd.* p. 42.—Ed.]

Piozzi, p. 43. grace the poet and his admirer. Garrick produced a passage that he had once heard the doctor commend, in which he *now* found, as Mrs. Piozzi remembered, sixteen faults, and made Garrick look silly at his own table.]

His defence of that great poet against the illiberal attacks upon him, as if his embracing the Roman Catholic communion had been a time-serving measure, is a piece of reasoning at once able and candid. Indeed, Dryden himself, in his "Hind and Panther," hath given such a picture of his mind, that they who know the anxiety for repose as to the awful subject of our state beyond the grave, though they may think his opinion ill-founded, must think charitably of his sentiment:

"But, gracious God, how well dost thou provide
For erring judgments an unerring guide!
Thy throne is darkness in the abyss of light,
A blaze of glory that forbids the sight.
O! teach me to believe thee thus conceal'd,
And search no farther than thyself reveal'd;
But Her alone for my director take,
Whom thou hast promised never to forsake.
My thoughtless youth was wing'd with vain desires;
My manhood long misled by wand'ring fires,
Follow'd false lights; and when their glimpse was gone,
My pride struck out new sparkles of her own.
Such was I, such by nature still I am;
Be thine the glory and be mine the shame.
Good life be now my task: my doubts are done;
What more could shock my faith than Three in One?"

In drawing Dryden's character, Johnson has given, though I suppose unintentionally, some touches of his own. Thus: "The power that predominated in his intellectual operations was rather strong reason than quick sensibility. Upon all occasions that were presented, he studied rather than felt; and produced sentiments not such as nature enforces, but meditation supplies. With the simple and elemental

passions, as they spring separate in the mind, he seems not much acquainted. He is, therefore, with all his variety of excellence, not often pathetick[1], and had so little sensibility of the power of effusions purely natural, that he did not esteem them in others." It may indeed be observed, that in all the numerous writings of Johnson, whether in prose or verse, and even in his tragedy, of which the subject is the distress of an unfortunate princess, there is not a single passage that ever drew a tear.

VARIOUS READINGS IN THE LIFE OF DRYDEN.

"The reason of this general perusal, Addison has attempted to [find in] *derive from* the delight which the mind feels in the investigation of secrets.

"His best actions are but [convenient] *inability of* wickedness.

"When once he had engaged himself in disputation [matter], *thoughts* flowed in on either side.

"The abyss of an un-ideal [emptiness] *vacancy.*

"These, like [many other harlots], *the harlots of other men,* had his love though not his approbation.

"He [sometimes displays] *descends to display* his knowledge with pedantick ostentation.

"French words which [were then used in] *had then crept into* conversation."

The life of Pope[2] was written by Johnson *con amore,* both from the early possession which that writer had taken of his mind, and from the pleasure which he must have felt, in for ever silencing all

[1] It seems to me, that there are many pathetic passages in Johnson's works both prose and verse.—KEARNEY.

[2] "Mr. D'Israeli," as Mr. Chalmers observes, "has in the third volume of his 'Literary Curiosities,' favoured the public with an original memorandum of Dr. Johnson's, of hints for the 'Life of Pope,' written down as they were suggested to his mind in the course of his researches. This is none of the least of those gratifications which Mr. D'Israeli has so frequently administered to the lovers of literary history."—ED.]

attempts to lessen his poetical fame, by demonstrating his excellence, and pronouncing the following triumphant eulogium:—"After all this, it is surely superfluous to answer the question that has once been asked, Whether Pope was a poet? otherwise than by asking in return, if Pope be not a poet, where is poetry to be found? To circumscribe poetry by a definition, will only show the narrowness of the definer; though a definition which shall exclude Pope will not easily be made. Let us look round upon the present time, and back upon the past; let us inquire to whom the voice of mankind has decreed the wreath of poetry; let their productions be examined, and their claims stated, and the pretensions of Pope will be no more disputed."

I remember once to have heard Johnson say, "Sir, a thousand years may elapse before there shall appear another man with a power of versification equal to that of Pope." That power must undoubtedly be allowed its due share in enhancing the value of his captivating composition.

Johnson, who had done liberal justice to Warburton in his edition of Shakspeare, which was published during the life of that powerful writer, with still greater liberality took an opportunity, in the life of Pope, of paying the tribute due to him when he was no longer in "high place," but numbered with the dead [1].

[1] Of Johnson's conduct towards Warburton, a very honourable notice is taken by the editor of "*Tracts by Warburton, and a Warburtonian, not admitted into the collection of their respective works.*" After an able and "fond, though not undistinguishing," consideration of Warburton's character, he says, "In two immortal works, Johnson has stood forth in the foremost rank of his admirers. By the testimony of such a man, impertinence must be abashed, and malignity itself must be softened. Of literary merit, Johnson, as we all know, was a sagacious but a most severe judge. Such was his discernment, that he pierced into the most secret springs of human actions; and such was his integrity, that he always weighed the moral characters of his fellow-creatures in the 'balance of the sanctuary.' He was too courageous to propitiate a rival, and too proud to truckle to a superiour. Warburton he knew, as I know him, and as every man of sense and virtue would wish to be known,—I mean, both from

It seems strange, that two such men as Johnson and Warburton, who lived in the same age and country, should not only not have been in any degree of intimacy, but been almost personally unacquainted. But such instances, though we must wonder at them, are not rare. If I am rightly informed, after a careful inquiry, they never met but once, which was at the house of Mrs. French, in London, well known

his own writings, and from the writings of those who dissented from his principles or who envied his reputation. But, as to favours, he had never received or asked any from the bishop of Gloucester; and, if my memory fails me not, he had seen him only once, when they met almost without design, conversed without much effort, and parted without any lasting impression of hatred or affection. Yet, with all the ardour of sympathetic genius, Johnson had done that spontaneously and ably, which, by some writers, had been before attempted injudiciously, and which, by others, from whom more successful attempts might have been expected, has not *hitherto* been done at all. He spoke well of Warburton, without insulting those whom Warburton despised. He suppressed not the imperfections of this extraordinary man, while he endeavoured to do justice to his numerous and transcendental excellencies. He defended him when living, amidst the clamours of his enemies; and praised him when dead, amidst the *silence of his friends*."—Having availed myself of the eulogy of this editor [*Dr. Parr*] on my departed friend, for which I warmly thank him, let me not suffer the lustre of his reputation, honestly acquired by profound learning and vigorous eloquence, to be tarnished by a charge of illiberality. He has been accused of invidiously dragging again into light certain writings of a person [*Bishop Hurd*] respectable by his talents, his learning, his station, and his age, which were published a great many years ago, and have since, it is said, been silently given up by their authour. But when it is considered that these writings were not *sins of youth*, but deliberate works of one well-advanced in life, overflowing at once with flattery to a great man of great interest in the church, and with unjust and acrimonious abuse of two men of eminent merit; and that, though it would have been unreasonable to expect an humiliating recantation, no apology whatever has been made in the cool of the evening, for the oppressive fervour of the heat of the day; no slight relenting indication has appeared in any note, or any corner of later publications; is it not fair to understand him as superciliously persevering? When he allows the shafts to remain in the wounds, and will not stretch forth a lenient hand, is it wrong, is it not generous to become an indignant avenger? [Warburton himself did not feel—as Mr. Boswell was disposed to think he did—kindly or gratefully of Johnson: for in one of his letters to a friend, he says, "The remarks he (Dr. Johnson) makes in every page on my commentaries, are full of insolent and malignant reflections, which, had they not in them as much folly as malignity, I should have had reason to be offended with. As it is, I think myself obliged to him in thus setting before the public so many of my notes, with his remarks upon them: for though I have no great opinion of the trifling part of the public, which pretends to judge of this part of literature, in which boys and girls decide, yet I think nobody can be mistaken in this comparison: though I think their thoughts have never yet extended thus far as to reflect, that to discover the corruption in an authour's text, and by a happy sagacity to restore it to sense, is no easy task: but when the discovery is made, then to cavil at the conjecture, to propose an equivalent, and defend *nonsense*, by producing out of the thick darkness it occasions a weak and faint glimmering of sense (which has been the business of this editor throughout) is the easiest, as well as the dullest, of all literary efforts."—*Warburton's Letters published by Bp. Hurd*, 8vo. 367.—ED.]

for her elegant assemblies, and bringing eminent characters together. The interview proved to be mutually agreeable.

Hawk. Apoph. p. 213. [Sir John Hawkins, however, relates that to a person who asked "whether he had ever been in company with Dr. Warburton?" he answered, "I never saw him till one evening, about a week ago, at the Bishop of St. [Asaph's]: at first he looked surlily at me; but after we had been jostled into conversation, he took me to a window, asked me some questions, and before we parted was so well pleased with me, that he patted me." "You always, sir, preserved a respect for him?" "Yes, and justly; when as yet I was in no favour with the world, he spoke well of me[1], and I hope I never forgot the obligation."]

I am well informed, that Warburton said of Johnson, "I admire him, but I cannot bear his style:" and that Johnson being told of this, said, "That is exactly my case as to him." The manner in which he expressed his admiration of the fertility of Warburton's genius and of the variety of his materials, was "The table is always full, sir. He brings things from the north, and the south, and from every quarter. In his 'Divine Legation,' you are always entertained. He carries you round and round, without carrying you forward to the point, but then you have no wish to be carried forward." He said to the Reverend Mr. Strahan, "Warburton is perhaps the last man who has written with a mind full of reading and reflection."

p. 208. [When a Scotsman was talking against Warburton, Johnson said he had more literature than had been imported from Scotland since the days of Buchanan. Upon his mentioning other eminent writers of the

[1] In his Preface to Shakspeare.

Scots—"These will not do," said Johnson; "let us have some more of your northern lights; these are mere farthing candles."]

It is remarkable, that in the Life of Broome, Johnson takes notice of Dr. Warburton's using a mode of expression which he himself used, and that not seldom, to the great offence of those who did not know him. Having occasion to mention a note, stating the different parts which were executed by the associated translators of "The Odyssey," he says, "Dr. Warburton told me, in his warm language, that he thought the relation given in the note *a lie*." The language is *warm* indeed; and, I must own, cannot be justified in consistency with a decent regard to the established forms of speech. Johnson had accustomed himself to use the word *lie*, to express a mistake or an errour in relation; in short, when the *thing was not so as told*, though the relater did not *mean* to deceive. When he thought there was intentional falsehood in the relater, his expression was, "He *lies*, and he *knows* he *lies*."

Speaking of Pope's not having been known to excel in conversation, Johnson observes, that "traditional memory retains no sallies of raillery, or sentences of observation; nothing either pointed or solid, wise or merry; and that one apophthegm only is recorded." In this respect, Pope differed widely from Johnson, whose conversation was, perhaps, more admirable than even his writings, however excellent. Mr. Wilkes has, however, favoured me with one repartee of Pope, of which Johnson was not informed. Johnson, after justly censuring him for having "nursed in his mind a foolish disesteem of kings," tells us, "yet a little regard shown him by the Prince of Wales melted his obduracy; and he had not much to say when he was asked by his royal highness, *how*

he could love a prince while he disliked kings?" The answer which Pope made was, "The young lion is harmless, and even playful; but when his claws are full grown, he becomes cruel, dreadful, and mischievous."

But although we have no collection of Pope's sayings, it is not therefore to be concluded, that he was not agreeable in social intercourse; for Johnson has been heard to say, that "the happiest conversation is that of which nothing is distinctly remembered, but a general effect of pleasing impression." The late Lord Somerville [1], who saw much both of great and brilliant life, told me, that he had dined in company with Pope, and that after dinner the *little man*, as he called him, drank his bottle of Burgundy [2], and was exceedingly gay and entertaining.

I cannot withhold from my great friend a censure of at least culpable inattention, to a nobleman, who, it has been shown, behaved to him with uncommon politeness. He says, "except Lord Bathurst, none of Pope's noble friends were such as that a good man would wish to have his intimacy with them known to posterity." This will not apply to Lord Mansfield, who was not ennobled in Pope's life-time; but Johnson should have recollected, that Lord Marchmont was one of those noble friends [3]. He includes

[1] James Lord Somerville, who died in 1763.—MALONE. [He was the 13th lord, and died in 1765.—ED.] Let me here express my grateful remembrance of Lord Somerville's kindness to me, at a very early period. He was the first person of high rank that took particular notice of me in the way most flattering to a young man, fondly ambitious of being distinguished for his literary talents; and by the honour of his encouragement made me think well of myself, and aspire to deserve it better. He had a happy art of communicating his varied knowledge of the world, in short remarks and anecdotes, with a quiet pleasant gravity, that was exceedingly engaging. Never shall I forget the hours which I enjoyed with him at his apartments in the royal palace of Holyrood House, and at his seat near Edinburgh, which he himself had formed with an elegant taste.—BOSWELL.

[2] [This must surely be a mistake; Pope never could have been in the *habit* of drinking a bottle of Burgundy at a sitting.—ED.]

[3] [He said, on a subsequent occasion, that another of Pope's noble friends, "Lord Peterborough, was a favourite of his." See *post*, 27th June, 1784.—ED.]

his lordship along with Lord Bolingbroke, in a charge of neglect of the papers which Pope left by his will; when, in truth, as I myself pointed out to him, before he wrote that poet's life, the papers were "committed to *the sole care and judgment* of Lord Bolingbroke, unless he (Lord Bolingbroke) shall not survive me;" so that Lord Marchmont has no concern whatever with them. After the first edition of the Lives, Mr. Malone, whose love of justice is equal to his accuracy, made, in my hearing, the same remark to Johnson; yet he omitted to correct the erroneous statement[1]. These particulars I mention, in the belief that there was only forgetfulness in my friend; but I owe this much to the Earl of Marchmont's reputation, who, were there no other memorials, will be immortalized by that line of Pope, in the verses on his Grotto:

"And the bright flame was shot through Marchmont's soul."

VARIOUS READINGS IN THE LIFE OF POPE.

"[Somewhat free] *sufficiently bold* in his criticism.

"All the gay [niceties] *varieties* of diction.

"Strikes the imagination with far [more] *greater* force.

"It is [probably] *certainly* the noblest version of poetry which the world has ever seen.

"Every sheet enabled him to write the next with [less trouble] *more facility.*

"No man sympathizes with [vanity depressed] *the sorrows of vanity.*

"It had been [criminal] *less easily excused.*

"When he [threatened to lay down] *talked of laying down* his pen.

[1] This neglect, however, assuredly did not arise from any ill-will towards Lord Marchmont, but from inattention; just as he neglected to correct his statement concerning the family of Thomson, the poet, after it had been shown to be erroneous.—MALONE.

"Society [is so named emphatically in opposition to] *politically regulated, is a state contra-distinguished from* a state of nature.

"A fictitious life of an [absurd] *infatuated* scholar.

"A foolish [contempt, disregard,] *disesteem* of kings.

"His hopes and fears, his joys and sorrows [were like those of other mortals] *acted strongly upon his mind.*

"Eager to pursue knowledge and attentive to [accumulate] *retain it.*

"A mind [excursive] *active*, ambitious, and adventurous.

"In its [noblest] *widest* searches still longing to go forward.

"He wrote in such a manner as might expose him to few [neglects] *hazards.*

"The [reasonableness] *justice* of my determination.

"A [favourite] *delicious* employment of the poets.

"More terrifick and more powerful [beings] *phantoms* perform on the stormy ocean.

"The inventor of [those] *this* petty [beings] *nation.*

"The [mind] *heart* naturally loves truth."

In the Life of Addison we find an unpleasing account of his having lent Steele a hundred pounds, and "reclaimed his loan by an execution." In the new edition of the *Biographia Britannica*, the authenticity of this anecdote is denied. But Mr. Malone has obliged me with the following note concerning it:—

"15th March, 1781.

"Many persons having doubts concerning this fact, I applied to Dr. Johnson, to learn on what

authority he asserted it. He told me, he had it from Savage, who lived in intimacy with Steele, and who mentioned, that Steele told him the story with tears in his eyes. Ben Victor, Dr. Johnson said, likewise informed him of this remarkable transaction, from the relation of Mr. Wilkes the comedian, who was also an intimate of Steele's[1]. Some, in defence of Addison, have said, that 'the act was done with the good-natured view of rousing Steele, and correcting that profusion which always made him necessitous.' 'If that were the case,' said Johnson, 'and that he only wanted to alarm Steele, he would afterwards have *returned* the money to his friend, which it is not pretended he did.' 'This, too,' he added, 'might be retorted by an advocate for Steele, who might allege, that he did not repay the loan *intentionally*, merely to see whether Addison would be mean and ungenerous enough to make use of legal process to recover it[2]. But of such speculations there is no end: we cannot dive into the hearts of men; but their actions are open to observation.'

"I then mentioned to him that some people thought that Mr. Addison's character was so pure, that the fact, *though true*, ought to have been suppressed. He saw no reason for this. 'If nothing but the bright side of characters should be shown, we should sit down in despondency, and think it utterly impossible to imitate them in *any thing*. The sacred writers,' he observed, 'related the vicious as well as the virtuous actions of men; which had this moral effect, that it kept mankind from *despair*, into which

[1] The late Mr. Burke informed me, in 1792, that Lady Dorothea Primrose, who died at a great age, I think in 1768, and had been well acquainted with Steele, told him the same story.—MALONE.

[2] [If the story be at all true—the most probable explanation is that which was given by Mr. Thomas Sheridan (see *post*, 15th April, 1781), namely, that it was a *friendly* execution put in to screen Steele's goods from hostile creditors. A not infrequent practice, nor quite unjustifiable, if the debt be real.—ED.]

otherwise they would naturally fall, were they not supported by the recollection that others had offended like themselves, and by penitence and amendment of life had been restored to the favour of Heaven [1].'

"E. M."

The last paragraph of this note is of great importance; and I request that my readers may consider it with particular attention. It will be afterwards referred to in this work.

VARIOUS READINGS IN THE LIFE OF ADDISON.

"[But he was our first example.] *He was, however, one of our earliest examples* of correctness.

"And [overlook] *despise* their masters.

"His instructions were such as the [state] *character* of his [own time] *readers* made [necessary] *proper.*

"His purpose was to [diffuse] *infuse* literary curiosity by gentle and unsuspected conveyance [among] *into* the gay, the idle, and the wealthy.

"Framed rather for those that [wish] *are learning* to write.

"Domestick [manners] *scenes.*"

Piozzi p. 125. [In the Life of Gay, the "female critic," as he calls her whose observation "that Gay was a poet of a lower order" he records, was his own wife.]

In his Life of Parnell, I wonder that Johnson

[1] I have since observed, that Johnson has further enforced the propriety of exhibiting the faults of virtuous and eminent men in their true colours, in the last paragraph of the 164th Number of his Rambler. "It is particularly the duty of those who consign illustrious names to posterity, to take care lest their readers be misled by ambiguous examples. That writer may be justly condemned as an enemy to goodness, who suffers fondness or interest to confound right with wrong, or to shelter the faults which even the wisest and the best have committed, from that ignominy which guilt ought always to suffer, and with which it should be more deeply stigmatized, when dignified by its neighbourhood to uncommon worth; since we shall be in danger of beholding it without abhorrence, unless its turpitude be laid open, and the eye secured from the deception of surrounding splendour."—MALONE.

omitted to insert an epitaph which he had long before composed for that amiable man, without ever writing it down, but which he was so good as, at my request, to dictate to me, by which means it has been preserved.

"Hic requiescit THOMAS PARNELL, S. T. P.

"Qui sacerdos pariter et poeta,
Utrasque partes ita implevit,
Ut neque sacerdoti suavitas poetæ,
Nec poetæ sacerdotis sanctitas, deesset."

VARIOUS READINGS IN THE LIFE OF PARNELL.

"About three years [after] *afterwards.*

"[Did not much want] *was in no great need of* improvement.

"But his prosperity *did not last long* [was clouded with that which took away all his powers of enjoying either profit or pleasure, the death of his wife, whom he is said to have lamented with such sorrow, as hastened his end[1].] His end, whatever was the cause, was now approaching.

"In the Hermit, the [composition] *narrative*, as it is less airy, is less pleasing."

In the Life of Blackmore, we find that writer's reputation generously cleared by Johnson from the cloud of prejudice which the malignity of contemporary wits had raised around it. In the spirited exertion of justice, he has been imitated by Sir Joshua Reynolds, in his praise of the architecture of Vanburgh.

We trace Johnson's own character in his observations on Blackmore's "magnanimity as an authour." "The incessant attacks of his enemies, whether seri-

[1] I should have thought that Johnson, who had felt the severe affliction from which Parnell never recovered, would have preserved this passage. He omitted it, doubtless, because he afterwards learned that however he might have lamented his wife, his end was hastened by other means.—MALONE.

ous or merry, are never discovered to have disturbed his quiet, or to have lessened his confidence in himself." Johnson, I recollect, once told me, laughing heartily, that he understood it has been said of him, "He *appears* not to feel; but when he is *alone*, depend upon it, he *suffers sadly*." I am as certain as I can be of any man's real sentiments, that he *enjoyed* the perpetual shower of little hostile arrows, as evidences of his fame.

VARIOUS READINGS IN THE LIFE OF BLACKMORE.

"To [set] *engage* poetry [on the side] *in the cause* of virtue.

"He likewise [established] *enforced* the truth of Revelation.

"[Kindness] *benevolence* was ashamed to favour.

"His practice, which was once [very extensive] *invidiously great.*

"There is scarcely any distemper of dreadful name [of] which he has not [shown] *taught his reader* how [it is to be opposed] *to oppose.*

"Of this [contemptuous] *indecent* arrogance.

"[He wrote] *but produced* likewise a work of a different kind.

"At least [written] *compiled* with integrity.

"Faults which many tongues [were desirous] *would have made haste* to publish.

"But though he [had not] *could not boast of* much critical knowledge.

"He [used] *waited for* no felicities of fancy.

"Or had ever elated his [mind] *views* to that ideal perfection which every [mind] *genius* born to excel is condemned always to pursue and never to overtake.

"The [first great] *fundamental* principle of wisdom and of virtue."

VARIOUS READINGS IN THE LIFE OF PHILIPS.

" His dreaded [rival] *antagonist* Pope.

" They [have not often much] *are not loaded with* thought.

" In his translation from Pindar, he [will not be denied to have reached] *found the art of reaching* all the obscurity of the Theban bard."

VARIOUS READINGS IN THE LIFE OF CONGREVE.

" Congreve's conversation must surely have been *at least* equally pleasing with his writings.

" It apparently [requires] *presupposes* a similar knowledge of many characters.

" Reciprocation of [similes] *conceits.*

" The dialogue is quick and [various] *sparkling.*

" Love for Love; a comedy [more drawn from life] *of nearer alliance to life.*

" The general character of his miscellanies is, that they show little wit and [no] *little* virtue.

" [Perhaps] *certainly* he had not the fire requisite for the higher species of lyrick poetry."

VARIOUS READINGS IN THE LIFE OF TICKELL.

" [Longed] *long wished* to peruse it.

" At the [accession] *arrival* of King George [1].

" Fiction [unnaturally] *unskilfully* compounded of Grecian deities and Gothick fairies."

VARIOUS READINGS IN THE LIFE OF AKENSIDE.

" For [another] *a different* purpose.

" [A furious] *an unnecessary* and outrageous zeal.

" [Something which] *what* he called and thought liberty.

" [A favourer of innovation] *lover of contradiction.*

" Warburton's [censure] *objections.*

[1] [The reader will observe that the *whig* term "*accession*," which might imply *legality*, was altered into a statement of the simple fact of King George's "*arrival*."—ED.]

"His rage [for liberty] *of patriotism.*

"Mr. Dyson with [a zeal] *an ardour* of friendship."

In the Life of Lyttelton, Johnson seems to have been not favourably disposed towards that nobleman. Mrs. Thrale suggests that he was offended by [Miss Hill Boothby's[1]] preference of his lordship to him[2]. [After mentioning the death of Mrs. Fitzherbert and Johnson's high admiration of her, she adds, "The friend of this lady, Miss Boothby[3], succeeded her in the management of Mr. Fitzherbert's family, and in the esteem of Dr. Johnson; though he told me, she pushed her piety to bigotry, her devotion to enthusiasm; that she somewhat disqualified herself for the duties of *this* life, by her perpetual aspirations after the *next:* such was, however, the purity of her mind, he said, and such the graces of her manner, that Lord Lyttelton and he used to strive for her preference with an emulation that occasioned hourly disgust, and

Piozzi, p. 124.

[1] [Mr. Boswell had, instead of *Miss Boothby*'s name, inserted that of *Molly Aston;* an error which he would not have forgiven to Mrs. Piozzi.—ED.]

[2] Let not my readers smile to think of Johnson's being a candidate for female favour; Mr. Peter Garrick assured me that he was told by a lady, that, in her opinion, Johnson was "a very *seducing man.*" Disadvantages of person and manner may be forgotten, where intellectual pleasure is communicated to a susceptible mind; and that Johnson was capable of feeling the most delicate and disinterested attachment appears from the following letter, which is published by Mrs. Thrale, with some others to the same person, of which the excellence is not so apparent:

"TO MISS BOOTHBY.

"January, 1755.

"DEAREST MADAM,—Though I am afraid your illness leaves you little leisure for the reception of airy civilities, yet I cannot forbear to pay you my congratulations on the new year; and to declare my wishes that your years to come may be many and happy. In this wish, indeed, I include myself, who have none but you on whom my heart reposes; yet surely I wish your good, even though your situation were such as should permit you to communicate no gratifications to, dearest, dearest madam, your, &c. "SAM. JOHNSON."

[3] Miss Hill Boothby, who was the only daughter of Brook Boothby, esq. and his wife, Elizabeth Fitzherbert, was somewhat older than Johnson. She was born October 27, 1708, and died January 16, 1756. Six Letters addressed to her by Johnson in the year 1755 are printed in Mrs. Piozzi's Collection; and a prayer composed by him on her death may be found in his "Prayers and Meditations." His affection for her induced him to preserve and bind up in a volume thirty-three of her Letters, which were purchased from the widow of his servant, Francis Barber, and published by R. Phillips in 1805.—MALONE.

ended in lasting animosity. 'You may see,' said he to me, 'when the Poets' Lives were printed, that dear Boothby is at my heart still.' She would delight on that fellow Lyttelton's company all I could do, and I cannot forgive even his memory the preference given by a mind like hers." Baretti has been heard to say, that, when this lady died, Dr. Johnson was almost distracted with grief, and that his friends about him had much to do to calm the violence of his emotions [1].]

I can by no means join in the censure bestowed by Johnson on his lordship, whom he calls "poor Lyttelton," for returning thanks to the critical reviewers, for having "kindly commended" his "Dialogues of the Dead." Such "acknowledgments," says my friend, "never can be proper, since they must be paid either for flattery or for justice." In my opinion, the most upright man, who has been tried on a false accusation, may, when he is acquitted, make a bow to his jury. And when those, who are so much the arbiters of literary merit, as in a considerable degree to influence the public opinion, review an authour's work, *placido*

[1] [Notwithstanding the mention of the "*heart*" in Mrs. Piozzi's anecdote and in the foregoing letter, there seems no reason to suppose that (as Miss Seward asserted) this was really an affair of the heart—"an early attachment" (see *ante*, vol. i. p. 51). The *other* letters, of which Boswell says that "their merit is not so apparent," (but which will be found in the Appendix), are written in still warmer terms of affection: Miss Boothby is "a sweet angel," and "a dear angel," and his "*heart* is full of tenderness;" but when the whole series of letters are read, it will be seen that the friendship began late in the life of both parties; that it was wholly *platonic*, or to speak more properly, *spiritual;* and that the letters in which these very affectionate expressions occur were written when Johnson believed that Miss Boothby was *dying*. It must also be observed, that it is very unlikely that Johnson should *seriously* confess that he had been so unjust to Lord Lyttelton from any private pique; and it seems, by his letters to Mrs. Thrale (*ante*, April, 1779), that he had no such feeling towards Lyttelton, and that he had applied to his lordship's friends to write the life; and finally, it is to be noted, Lord Lyttelton married his second lady in 1749, and Johnson does not seem to have known Miss Boothby till 1754. In short, the Editor has no doubt, nor will any one who reads the letters, and considers how little personal intercourse there could have been between Miss Boothby and Dr. Johnson, that the whole story is a mistake, founded, perhaps, on some confusion between Miss Boothby and Miss Aston, and countenanced, it must be admitted, by the warm expressions of the letters.—ED.]

lumine, when I am afraid mankind in general are better pleased with severity, he may surely express a grateful sense of their civility.

VARIOUS READINGS IN THE LIFE OF LYTTELTON.

"He solaced [himself] *his grief* by writing a long poem to her memory.

"The production rather [of a mind that means well, than thinks vigorously] *as it seems of leisure than of study, rather effusions than compositions.*

"His last literary [work] *production.*

"[Found the way] *undertook* to persuade."

As the introduction to his critical examination of the genius and writings of Young, he did Mr. Herbert Croft, then a barrister of Lincoln's-inn, now a clergyman[1], the honour to adopt a Life of Young, written by that gentleman, who was the friend of Dr. Young's son, and wished to vindicate him from some very erroneous remarks to his prejudice. Mr. Croft's performance was subjected to the revision of Dr. Johnson, as appears from the following note to Mr. John Nichols[2]:

"This Life of Dr. Young was written by a friend of his son. What is crossed with black is expunged by the authour, what is crossed with red is expunged by me. If you find any thing more that can be well omitted, I shall not be sorry to see it yet shorter."

It has always appeared to me to have a considerable share of merit, and to display a pretty successful imitation of Johnson's style. When I mentioned

[1] [Afterwards Sir Herbert Croft, bart. He died at Paris, after a residence of fifteen years in that city, April 27, 1816. See *Gent. Mag.* for May, 1816.—Ed.]

[2] *Gentleman's Magazine*, vol. iv. p. 10.—Boswell.

this to a very eminent literary character[1], he opposed me vehemently, exclaiming, "No, no, it is *not* a good imitation of Johnson; it has all his pomp without his force; it has all the nodosities of the oak without its strength." This was an image so happy, that one might have thought he would have been satisfied with it; but he was not. And setting his mind again to work, he added, with exquisite felicity, "It has all the contortions of the sibyl, without the inspiration."

Mr. Croft very properly guards us against supposing that Young was a gloomy man; and mentions, that "his parish was indebted to the good-humour of the authour of the 'Night Thoughts' for an assembly and a bowling-green." A letter from a noble foreigner is quoted, in which he is said to have been "very pleasant in conversation."

Mr. Langton, who frequently visited him, informs me that there was an air of benevolence in his manner, but that he could obtain from him less information than he had hoped to receive from one who had lived so much in intercourse with the brightest men of what has been called the Augustan age of England; and that he showed a degree of eager curiosity concerning the common occurrences that were then passing, which appeared somewhat remarkable in a man of such intellectual stores, of such an advanced age, and who had retired from life with declared disappointment in his expectations.

An instance at once of his pensive turn of mind, and his cheerfulness of temper, appeared in a little story, which he himself told to Mr. Langton, when they were walking in his garden: "Here (said he) I had put a handsome sun-dial, with this inscription,

[1] Mr. Burke.—MALONE.

Eheu fugaces! which (speaking with a smile) was sadly verified, for by the next morning my dial had been carried off[1]."

It gives me much pleasure to observe, that however Johnson may have casually talked, yet when he sits, as "an ardent judge zealous to his trust, giving sentence" upon the excellent works of Young, he allows them the high praise to which they are justly entitled. "The *Universal Passion*," says he, "is indeed a very great performance,—his distichs have the weight of solid sentiment, and his points the sharpness of resistless truth."

Piozzi, p. 45. [The person spoken of in Johnson's strictures on the poetry of Young, "as a lady of whose praise he would have been justly proud," was Mrs. Thrale, who was a great admirer of Young, and one day forced Johnson to prefer Young's description of night to the so-much-admired ones of Dryden and Shakspeare, as more forcible and more general. Every reader is not either a lover or a tyrant, but every reader is interested when he hears that

> "Creation sleeps; 't is as the general pulse
> Of life stood still, and nature made a pause—
> An awful pause—prophetic of its end."

"This," said he, "is true; but remember that taking the compositions of Young in general, they are but like bright stepping-stones over a miry road: Young froths, and foams, and bubbles, sometimes very vigorously; but we must not compare the noise made by your tea-kettle here with the roaring of the ocean."]

But I was most anxious concerning Johnson's decision upon "Night Thoughts," which I esteem as

[1] The late Mr. James Ralph told Lord Macartney, that he passed an evening with Dr. Young at Lord Melcombe's (then Mr. Doddington), at Hammersmith. The doctor happening to go out into the garden, Mr. Doddington observed to him, on his return, that it was a dreadful night, as in truth it was, there being a violent storm of rain and wind. "No, sir," replied the doctor, "it is a very fine night. The Lord is abroad!"—BOSWELL.

a mass of the grandest and richest poetry that human genius has ever produced; and was delighted to find this character of that work: "In his 'Night Thoughts,' he has exhibited a very wide display of original poetry, variegated with deep reflection and striking allusions: a wilderness of thought, in which the fertility of fancy scatters flowers of every hue and of every odour. This is one of the few poems in which blank verse could not be changed for rhyme, but with disadvantage." And afterwards, "Particular lines are not to be regarded; the power is in the whole; and in the whole there is a magnificence like that ascribed to Chinese plantation, the magnificence of vast extent and endless diversity."

But there is in this poem not only all that Johnson so well brings in view, but a power of the *pathetic* beyond almost any example that I have seen. He who does not feel his nerves shaken, and his heart pierced by many passages in this extraordinary work, particularly by that most affecting one, which describes the gradual torment suffered by the contemplation of an object of affectionate attachment visibly and certainly decaying into dissolution, must be of a hard and obstinate frame.

To all the other excellencies of "Night Thoughts" let me add the great and peculiar one, that they contain not only the noblest sentiments of virtue and contemplations on immortality, but the *christian sacrifice*, the *divine propitiation*, with all its interesting circumstances, and consolations to a "wounded spirit," solemnly and poetically displayed in such imagery and language, as cannot fail to exalt, animate, and soothe the truly pious. No book whatever can be recommended to young persons, with better hopes of seasoning their minds with *vital religion*, than "Young's Night Thoughts."

In the life of Swift, it appears to me that Johnson had a certain degree of prejudice against that extraordinary man, of which I have elsewhere had occasion to speak. Mr. Thomas Sheridan imputed it to a supposed apprehension in Johnson, that Swift had not been sufficiently active in obtaining for him an Irish degree when it was solicited [1]; but of this there was not sufficient evidence; and let me not presume to charge Johnson with injustice, because he did not think so highly of the writings of this authour, as I have done from my youth upwards. Yet that he had an unfavourable bias is evident, were it only from that passage in which he speaks of Swift's practice of saving, as "first ridiculous, and at last detestable;" and yet, after some examination of circumstances, finds himself obliged to own, that "it will perhaps appear that he only liked one mode of expense better than another, and saved merely that he might have something to give."

One observation which Johnson makes in Swift's life should be often inculcated: "It may be justly supposed, that there was in his conversation what appears so frequently in his letters, an affectation of familiarity with the great, an ambition of momentary equality, sought and enjoyed by the neglect of those ceremonies which custom has established as the barriers between one order of society and another. This transgression of regularity was by himself and his admirers termed greatness of soul; but a great mind disdains to hold any thing by courtesy, and therefore never usurps what a lawful claimant may take away. He that encroaches on another's dignity, puts himself in his power; he is either repelled with helpless indignity, or endured by clemency and condescension."

[1] See vol. i. p. 102.

VARIOUS READINGS IN THE LIFE OF SWIFT.

"Charity may be persuaded to think that it might be written by a man of *a* peculiar [opinions] *character*, without ill intention.

"He did not [disown] *deny* it.

"[To] *by* whose kindness it is not unlikely that he was [indebted for] *advanced to* his benefices.

"[With] *for* this purpose he had recourse to Mr. Harley.

"Sharpe, whom he [represents] *describes* as 'the harmless tool of others' hate.'

"Harley was slow because he was [irresolute] *doubtful.*

"When [readers were not many] *we were not yet a nation of readers.*

"[Every man who] *he that could say he* knew him.

"Every man of known influence has so many [more] petitions [than] *which* [he can] *cannot* grant, that he must necessarily offend more than he [can gratify] *gratifies.*

"Ecclesiastical [preferments] *benefices.*

"Swift [procured] *contrived* an interview.

"[As a writer] *In his works* he has given very different specimens.

"On all common occasions he habitually [assumes] *affects* a style of [superiority] *arrogance.*

"By the [omission] *neglect* of those ceremonies.

"That their merits filled the world [and] *or that* there was no [room for] *hope of* more."

I have not confined myself to the order of the "Lives," in making my few remarks. Indeed a different order is observed in the original publication, and in the collection of Johnson's works. And should it be objected, that many of my various readings are

inconsiderable, those who make an objection will be pleased to consider, that such small particulars are intended for those who are nicely critical in composition, to whom they will be an acceptable selection[1].

"Spence's Anecdotes," which are frequently quoted and referred to in Johnson's "Lives of the Poets," are in a manuscript collection, made by the Reverend Mr. Joseph Spence[2], containing a number of particulars concerning eminent men. To each anecdote is marked the name of the person on whose authority it is mentioned. This valuable collection is the property of the Duke of Newcastle, who, upon the application of Sir Lucas Pepys, was pleased to permit it to be put into the hands of Dr. Johnson, who I am sorry to think made but an awkward return. "Great assistance," says he, "has been given me by Mr. Spence's Collection, of which I consider the communication as a favour worthy of publick acknowledgment:" but he has not owned to whom he was obliged; so that the acknowledgment is unappropriated to his grace.

While the world in general was filled with admiration of Johnson's "Lives of the Poets," there were narrow circles in which prejudice and resentment were fostered, and from which attacks of different sorts issued against him[3]. By some violent whigs

[1] [Mr. Chalmers here records a curious literary anecdote—that when a new and enlarged edition of the "Lives of the Poets" was published in 1783, Mr. Nichols, in justice to the purchasers of the preceding editions, printed the additions in a separate pamphlet, and advertised that it might be had *gratis*. Not ten copies were called for. It may be presumed that the owners of the former editions had *bound* their sets; but it must also be observed, that the alterations were not considerable.—ED.]

[2] The Rev. Joseph Spence, A. M. Rector of Great Harwood in Buckinghamshire, and Prebendary of Durham, died at Byfleet in Surrey, August 20, 1768. He was a fellow of New College in Oxford, and held the office of Professor of Poetry in that University from 1728 to 1738.—MALONE. [See *ante*, p. 302. *n.*—ED.]

[3] From this disreputable class, I except an ingenious though not satisfactory defence of Hammond, which I did not see till lately, by the favour of its authour, my amiable friend, the Reverend Mr. Bevil, who published it without

he was arraigned of injustice to Milton; by some Cambridge men of depreciating Gray; and his expressing with a dignified freedom what he really thought of George, Lord Lyttelton, gave offence to some of the friends of that nobleman, and particularly produced a declaration of war against him from Mrs. Montagu, the ingenious essayist on Shakspeare, between whom and his lordship a commerce of reciprocal compliments had long been carried on. In this war the smaller powers in alliance with him were of course led to engage, at least on the defensive, and thus I for one was excluded[1] from the enjoyment of "A Feast of Reason," such as Mr. Cumberland has described, with a keen yet just and delicate pen, in his "Observer." These minute inconveniences gave not the least disturbance to Johnson. He nobly said, when I talked to him of the feeble though shrill outcry which had been raised, "Sir, I considered myself as intrusted with a certain portion of truth. I have given my opinion sincerely; let them show where they think me wrong."

While my friend is thus contemplated in the splendour derived from his last and perhaps most admirable work, I introduce him with peculiar propriety as the correspondent of Warren Hastings! a man whose regard reflects dignity even upon Johnson; a man, the extent of whose abilities was equal to that of his power; and who, by those who are fortunate enough to know him in private life, is admired for his literature and taste, and beloved for the candour, moderation, and mildness of his character. Were I ca-

his name. It is a juvenile performance, but elegantly written, with classical enthusiasm of sentiment, and yet with a becoming modesty, and great respect for Dr. Johnson.—BOSWELL.

[1] [Mr. Boswell has always appeared willing to record Dr. Johnson's sarcasms against Mrs. Montagu, leaving unnoticed many expressions of regard and respect of which he could not have been ignorant. Could the circumstance alluded to in the text have biassed him?—ED.]

pable of paying a suitable tribute of admiration to him, I should certainly not withhold it at a moment[1] when it is not possible that I should be suspected of being an interested flatterer. But how weak would be my voice after that of the millions whom he governed! His condescending and obliging compliance with my solicitation, I with humble gratitude acknowledge; and while by publishing his letter to me, accompanying the valuable communication, I do eminent honour to my great friend, I shall entirely disregard any invidious suggestions that, as I in some degree participate in the honour, I have, at the same time, the gratification of my own vanity in view.

"TO JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

"Park-lane, 2d Dec. 1790.

"SIR,—I have been fortunately spared the troublesome suspense of a long search, to which, in performance of my promise, I had devoted this morning, by lighting upon the objects of it among the first papers that I laid my hands on; my veneration for your great and good friend, Dr. Johnson, and the pride, or I hope something of a better sentiment, which I indulge in possessing such memorials of his good will towards me, having induced me to bind them in a parcel containing other select papers, and labelled with the titles appertaining to them. They consist but of three letters, which I believe were all that I ever received from Dr. Johnson. Of these, one, which was written in quadruplicate, under the different dates of its respective despatches, has already been made publick, but not from any communication of mine. This, however, I have joined to the rest; and have now the pleasure of sending them to you, for the use to which you informed me it was your desire to destine them.

"My promise was pledged with the condition, that if the letters were found to contain any thing which should render them improper for the publick eye, you would dispense with the performance of it. You will have the goodness, I am sure, to pardon my recalling this stipulation to your recollection, as I shall be loth to appear negligent of that obligation which is

[1] January, 1791.—BOSWELL. [Mr. Hastings's impeachment was still pending.—ED.]

always implied in an epistolary confidence. In the reservation of that right I have read them over with the most scrupulous attention, but have not seen in them the slightest cause on that ground to withhold them from you. But, though not on that, yet on another ground I own I feel a little, yet but a little, reluctance to part with them: I mean on that of my own credit, which I fear will suffer by the information conveyed by them, that I was early in the possession of such valuable instructions for the beneficial employment of the influence of my late station, and (as it may seem) have so little availed myself of them. Whether I could, if it were necessary, defend myself against such an imputation, it little concerns the world to know. I look only to the effect which these relicks may produce, considered as evidences of the virtues of their authour: and believing that they will be found to display an uncommon warmth of private friendship, and a mind ever attentive to the improvement and extension of useful knowledge, and solicitous for the interests of mankind, I can cheerfully submit to the little sacrifice of my own fame, to contribute to the illustration of so great and venerable a character. They cannot be better applied, for that end, than by being intrusted to your hands. Allow me, with this offering, to infer from it a proof of the very great esteem with which I have the honour to profess myself, sir, your most obedient and most humble servant, "WARREN HASTINGS.

"P. S. At some future time, and when you have no further occasion for these papers, I shall be obliged to you if you will return them."

The last of the three letters thus graciously put into my hands, and which has already appeared in publick, belongs to this year; but I shall previously insert the first two in the order of their dates. They altogether form a grand group in my biographical picture.

"TO THE HONOURABLE WARREN HASTINGS, ESQ.

"30th March, 1774.

"SIR,—Though I have had but little personal knowledge of you, I have had enough to make me wish for more; and though it be now a long time since I was honoured by your visit, I had too much pleasure from it to forget it. By those whom we delight to remember, we are unwilling to be forgotten; and

therefore I cannot omit this opportunity of reviving myself in your memory by a letter which you will receive from the hands of my friend Mr. Chambers[1]; a man whose purity of manners and vigour of mind are sufficient to make every thing welcome that he brings.

"That this is my only reason for writing will be too apparent by the uselessness of my letter to any other purpose. I have no questions to ask; not that I want curiosity after either the ancient or present state of regions in which have been seen all the power and splendour of wide-extended empire; and which, as by some grant of natural superiority, supply the rest of the world with almost all that pride desires and luxury enjoys. But my knowledge of them is too scanty to furnish me with proper topicks of inquiry: I can only wish for information; and hope that a mind comprehensive like yours will find leisure, amidst the cares of your important station, to inquire into many subjects of which the European world either thinks not at all, or thinks with deficient intelligence and uncertain conjecture. I shall hope that he who once intended to increase the learning of his country by the introduction of the Persian language will examine nicely the traditions and histories of the East; that he will survey the wonders of its ancient edifices, and trace the vestiges of its ruined cities; and that, at his return, we shall know the arts and opinions of a race of men from whom very little has been hitherto derived.

"You, sir, have no need of being told by me how much may be added by your attention and patronage to experimental knowledge and natural history. There are arts of manufacture practised in the countries in which you preside, which are yet very imperfectly known here, either to artificers or philosophers. Of the natural productions, animate and inanimate, we yet have so little intelligence, that our books are filled, I fear, with conjectures about things which an Indian peasant knows by his senses.

"Many of those things my first wish is to see; my second to know, by such accounts as a man like you will be able to give.

"As I have not skill to ask proper questions, I have likewise no such access to great men as can enable me to send you any political information. Of the agitations of an unsettled government, and the struggles of a feeble ministry, care is doubtless

[1] Afterwards Sir Robert Chambers, one of his majesty's judges in India.—BOSWELL.

taken to give you more exact accounts than I can obtain. If you are inclined to interest yourself much in public transactions, it is no misfortune to you to be distant from them.

"That literature is not totally forsaking us, and that your favourite language is not neglected, will appear from the book [1], which I should have pleased myself more with sending, if I could have presented it bound: but time was wanting. I beg, however, sir, that you will accept it from a man very desirous of your regard; and that if you think me able to gratify you by any thing more important you will employ me.

"I am now going to take leave, perhaps a very long leave, of my dear Mr. Chambers. That he is going to live where you govern may justly alleviate the regard of parting: and the hope of seeing both him and you again, which I am not willing to mingle with doubt, must at present comfort as it can, sir, your most humble servant, "SAM. JOHNSON."

"DR. JOHNSON TO MR. HASTINGS.

"London, 20th Dec. 1774.

"SIR,—Being informed that by the departure of a ship there is now an opportunity of writing to Bengal, I am unwilling to slip out of your memory by my own negligence, and therefore take the liberty of reminding you of my existence by sending you a book which is not yet made publick.

"I have lately visited a region less remote and less illustrious than India, which afforded some occasions for speculation. What has occurred to me, I have put into the volume [2], of which I beg your acceptance.

"Men in your station seldom have presents totally disinterested: my book is received, let me now make my request.

"There is, sir, somewhere within your government, a young adventurer, one Chauncey Lawrence, whose father is one of my oldest friends. Be pleased to show the young man what countenance is fit; whether he wants to be restrained by your authority, or encouraged by your favour. His father is now president of the college of physicians; a man venerable for his knowledge, and more venerable for his virtue.

"I wish you a prosperous government, a safe return, and a long enjoyment of plenty and tranquillity. I am, sir, your most obedient and most humble servant, "SAM. JOHNSON."

1 Jones's "Persian Grammar."—BOSWELL.
2 "The Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland."—BOSWELL.

"DR. JOHNSON TO MR. HASTINGS.

"9th January, 1781.

"SIR,—Amidst the importance and multiplicity of affairs in which your great office engages you, I take the liberty of recalling your attention for a moment to literature, and will not prolong the interruption by an apology which your character makes needless.

"Mr. Hoole, a gentleman long known and long esteemed in the India-house, after having translated Tasso, has undertaken Ariosto. How well he is qualified for his undertaking he has already shown. He is desirous, sir, of your favour in promoting his proposals, and flatters me by supposing that my testimony may advance his interest.

"It is a new thing for a clerk of the India-house to translate poets;—it is new for a governor of Bengal to patronise learning. That he may find his ingenuity rewarded, and that learning may flourish under your protection, is the wish of, sir, your most humble servant, "SAM. JOHNSON."

I wrote to him in February, complaining of having been troubled by a recurrence of the perplexing question of Liberty and Necessity; and mentioning that I hoped soon to meet him again in London.

"DR. JOHNSON TO MR. BOSWELL.

"14th March, 1781.

"DEAR SIR,—I hoped you had got rid of all this hypocrisy of misery. What have you to do with Liberty and Necessity? Or what more than to hold your tongue about it? Do not doubt but I shall be most heartily glad to see you here again, for I love every part about you but your affectation of distress.

"I have at last finished my Lives, and have laid up for you a load of copy, all out of order, so that it will amuse you a long time to set it right. Come to me, my dear Bozzy, and let us be as happy as we can. We will go again to the Mitre, and talk old times over. I am, dear sir, yours affectionately,

"SAM. JOHNSON."

On Monday, March 19, I arrived in London, and on Tuesday, the 20th, met him in Fleet-street, walk-

ing, or rather indeed moving along; for his peculiar march is thus described in a very just and picturesque manner, in a short Life[1] of him published very soon after his death:—"When he walked the streets, what with the constant roll of his head, and the concomitant motion of his body, he appeared to make his way by that motion, independent of his feet[2]." That he was often much stared at while he advanced in this manner may easily be believed; but it was not safe to make sport of one so robust as he was. Mr. Langton saw him one day, in a fit of absence, by a sudden start, drive the load off a porter's back, and walk forward briskly, without being conscious of what he had done. The porter was very angry, but stood still, and eyed the huge figure with much earnestness, till he was satisfied that his wisest course was to be quiet, and take up his burthen again.

Our accidental meeting in the street after a long separation was a pleasing surprise to us both. He stepped aside with me into Falcon-court, and made kind inquiries about my family; and as we were in a hurry, going different ways, I promised to call on him next day. He said he was engaged to go out in the morning. "Early, sir?" said I. JOHNSON. "Why, sir, a London morning does not go with the sun."

I waited on him next evening, and he gave me a great portion of his original manuscript of his "Lives of the Poets," which he had preserved for me.

I found on visiting his friend, Mr. Thrale, that

[1] Published by Kearsley, with this well-chosen motto:

"——————— From his cradle
He was a scholar, and a ripe and good one:
And, to add greater honours to his age
Than man could give him, he died fearing Heaven."
SHAKSPEARE.

[2] [See Miss Reynolds's *Recollections*, in the Appendix, for a fuller account of Johnson's extraordinary gestures.—ED.]

he was now very ill, and had removed, I suppose by the solicitation of Mrs. Thrale, to a house in Grosvenor-square. I was sorry to see him sadly changed in his appearance.

He told me I might now have the pleasure to see Dr. Johnson drink wine again, for he had lately returned to it. When I mentioned this to Johnson, he said, "I drink it now sometimes, but not socially." The first evening that I was with him at Thrale's, I observed he poured a large quantity of it into a glass, and swallowed it greedily. Every thing about his character and manners was forcible and violent; there never was any moderation. Many a day did he fast, many a year did he refrain from wine: but when he did eat, it was voraciously; when he did drink wine, it was copiously. He could practise abstinence[1], but not temperance.

Mrs. Thrale and I had a dispute whether Shakspeare or Milton had drawn the most admirable picture of a man[2]. I was for Shakspeare, Mrs. Thrale

[1] [See *ante*, vol. i. p. 480.—Ed.]

[2] Shakspeare makes Hamlet thus describe his father:

"See what a grace was seated on this brow:
Hyperion's curls, the front of Jove himself,
An eye like Mars, to threaten and command;
A station like the herald, Mercury,
New-lighted on a heaven-kissing hill;
A combination and a form, indeed,
Where every god did seem to set his seal,
To give the world assurance of a man."

Milton thus portrays our first parent, Adam:

"His fair large front and eye sublime declared
Absolute rule; and hyacinthin locks
Round from his parted forelock manly hung
Clust'ring, but not beneath his shoulders broad."—Boswell.

The latter part of this description, "but not beneath," &c. may very probably be ascribed to Milton's prejudices in favour of the puritans, who had a great aversion to *long* hair.—Malone. It is strange that the picture drawn by the unlearned Shakspeare should be full of classical images, and that by the learned Milton void of them. Milton's description appears to be more picturesque.—Kearney. [Dr. Kearney seems to have forgotten that Milton is here a mere *descriptive* poet, giving a kind of abstract delineation of the first man, while Shakspeare is a *dramatist*, speaking in the *character* of an enthusiastic youth, fresh from his studies, and boiling with indignation and grief, which he endeavours to conceal, or at least to moderate by these classical and, what in any other case would be, pedantic allusions.—Ed.]

for Milton; and, after a fair hearing, Johnson decided for my opinion.

I told him of one of Mr. Burke's playful sallies upon Dean Marlay[1]: "I don't like the Deanery of *Ferns*; it sounds so like a *barren* title." "Dr. *Heath* should have it," said I. Johnson laughed, and, condescending to trifle in the same mode of conceit, suggested Dr. *Moss*.

He said, "Mrs. Montagu has dropt me[2]. Now, sir, there are people whom one should like very well to drop, but would not wish to be dropped by." He certainly was vain of the society of ladies, and could make himself very agreeable to them when he chose it: Sir Joshua Reynolds agreed with me that he could. Mr. Gibbon, with his usual sneer, controverted it, perhaps in resentment of Johnson's having talked with some disgust of his ugliness, which one would think a *philosopher* would not mind. Dean Marlay wittily observed, "A lady may be vain when she can turn a wolf-dog into a lap-dog."

The election for Ayrshire, my own county, was this spring tried upon a petition before a committee of the house of commons. I was one of the counsel for the sitting member[3], and took the liberty of previously stating different points to Johnson, who never failed to see them clearly, and to supply me with some good hints. He dictated to me the following note upon the registration of deeds:

[1] Dr. Richard Marlay, afterwards Lord Bishop of Waterford; a very amiable, benevolent, and ingenious man. He was chosen a member of the Literary Club in 1777, and died in Dublin, July 2, 1802, in his seventy-fifth year.—MALONE. [The Editor had, in very early life, the honour of the bishop's acquaintance and indulgent notice of his first attempts in literature. He was all that Mr. Malone says of him.—ED.]

[2] [Mrs. Montagu, with, perhaps, an over-nicety of feeling, *dropped him* on account of his Life of Lord Lyttelton. See *ante*, p. 427.—ED.]

[3] [Hugh Montgomery, esq. The petitioner, however, William Macdowall, esq., was declared duly elected.—ED.]

"All laws are made for the convenience of the community. What is legally done should be legally recorded, that the state of things may be known, and that wherever evidence is requisite, evidence may be had. For this reason, the obligation to frame and establish a legal register is enforced by a legal penalty, which penalty is the want of that perfection and plenitude of right which a register would give. Thence it follows that this is not an objection merely legal; for the reason on which the law stands being equitable makes it an equitable objection."

"This," said he, "you must enlarge on, when speaking to the committee. You must not argue there as if you were arguing in the schools; close reasoning will not fix their attention: you must say the same thing over and over again in different words. If you say it but once, they miss it in a moment of inattention. It is unjust, sir, to censure lawyers for multiplying words when they argue; it is often *necessary* for them to multiply words."

His notion of the duty of a member of parliament, sitting upon an election-committee, was very high; and when he was told of a gentleman upon one of those committees, who read the newspapers part of the time, and slept the rest, while the merits of a vote were examined by the counsel; and as an excuse, when challenged by the chairman for such behaviour, bluntly answered, "I had made up my mind upon that case;" Johnson, with an indignant contempt, said, "If he was such a rogue as to make up his mind upon a case without hearing it, he should not have been such a fool as to tell it." "I think," said Mr. Dudley Long [1], now North, "the doctor has pretty plainly made him out to be both rogue and fool."

Johnson's profound reverence for the hierarchy

[1] [This ingenious and very pleasant gentleman died in 1829, after an illness which had for some years secluded him from society.—ED.]

made him expect from bishops the highest degree of decorum; he was offended even at their going to taverns: "A bishop," said he, "has nothing to do at a tippling-house. It is not indeed immoral in him to go to a tavern; neither would it be immoral in him to whip a top in Grosvenor-square: but, if he did, I hope the boys would fall upon him, and apply the whip to *him*. There are gradations in conduct; there is morality,—decency,—propriety. None of these should be violated by a bishop. A bishop should not go to a house where he may meet a young fellow leading out a wench." BOSWELL. "But, sir, every tavern does not admit women." JOHNSON. "Depend upon it, sir, any tavern will admit a well-dressed man and a well-dressed woman. They will not perhaps admit a woman whom they see every night walking by their door in the street. But a well-dressed man may lead in a well-dressed woman to any tavern in London. Taverns sell meat and drink, and will sell them to any body who can eat and can drink. You may as well say that a mercer will not sell silks to a woman of the town."

He also disapproved of bishops going to routs; at least of their staying at them longer than their presence commanded respect. He mentioned a particular bishop. "Poh!" said Mrs. Thrale, "the Bishop of — ———[1] is never minded at a rout." BOSWELL. "When a bishop places himself in a situation where he has no distinct character, and is of no consequence, he degrades the dignity of his order." JOHNSON. "Mr. Boswell, madam, has said it as correctly as it could be."

Nor was it only in the dignitaries of the church

[1] [St. Asaph's. See *ante*, p. 313.—ED.]

that Johnson required a particular decorum and delicacy of behaviour; he justly considered that the clergy, as persons set apart for the sacred office of serving at the altar, and impressing the minds of men with the awful concerns of a future state, should be somewhat more serious than the generality of mankind, and have a suitable composure of manners. A due sense of the dignity of their profession, independent of higher motives, will ever prevent them from losing their distinction in an indiscriminate sociality; and did such as affect this know how much it lessens them in the eyes of those whom they think to please by it, they would feel themselves much mortified.

Johnson and his friend Beauclerk were once together in company with several clergymen, who thought that they should appear to advantage by assuming the lax jollity of *men of the world;* which, as it may be observed in similar cases, they carried to noisy excess. Johnson, who they expected would be *entertained,* sat grave and silent for some time; at last, turning to Beauclerk, he said, by no means in a whisper, "This merriment of parsons is mighty offensive."

Even the dress of a clergyman should be in character, and nothing can be more despicable than conceited attempts at avoiding the appearance of the clerical order; attempts which are as ineffectual as they are pitiful. Dr. Porteus, now Bishop of London, in his excellent charge when presiding over the diocese of Chester, justly animadverts upon this subject; and observes of a reverend fop, that he "can be but *half a beau.*"

Addison, in "The Spectator," has given us a fine portrait of a clergyman, who is supposed to be a

member of his *Club;* and Johnson has exhibited a model, in the character of Mr. Mudge[1], which has escaped the collectors of his works, but which he owned to me, and which indeed he showed to Sir Joshua Reynolds at the time when it was written. It bears the genuine marks of Johnson's best manner, and is as follows:

"The Reverend Mr. Zachariah Mudge, prebendary of Exeter, and vicar of St. Andrew's in Plymouth; a man equally eminent for his virtues and abilities, and at once beloved as a companion and reverenced as a pastor. He had that general curiosity to which no kind of knowledge is indifferent or superfluous; and that general benevolence by which no order of men is hated or despised.

"His principles both of thought and action were great and comprehensive. By a solicitous examination of objections, and judicious comparison of opposite arguments, he attained what inquiry never gives but to industry and perspicuity, a firm and unshaken settlement of conviction. But his firmness was without asperity; for, knowing with how much difficulty truth was sometimes found, he did not wonder that many missed it.

"The general course of his life was determined by his profession; he studied the sacred volumes in the original languages; with what diligence and success his 'Notes upon the Psalms' give sufficient evidence. He once endeavoured to add the knowledge of Arabic to that of Hebrew; but, finding his thoughts too much diverted from other studies, after some time desisted from his purpose.

"His discharge of parochial duties was exemplary. How his sermons were composed, may be learned from the excellent volume which he has given to the

[1] See *ante*, vol. i. p. 367.—BOSWELL.

publick; but how they were delivered can be known only to those that heard them; for, as he appeared in the pulpit, words will not easily describe him. His delivery, though unconstrained, was not negligent; and though forcible, was not turbulent; disdaining anxious nicety of emphasis, and laboured artifice of action, it captivated the hearer by its natural dignity; it roused the sluggish and fixed the volatile, and detained the mind upon the subject without directing it to the speaker.

"The grandeur and solemnity of the preacher did not intrude upon his general behaviour: at the table of his friends he was a companion communicative and attentive, of unaffected manners, of manly cheerfulness, willing to please, and easy to be pleased. His acquaintance was universally solicited, and his presence obstructed no enjoyment which religion did not forbid. Though studious, he was popular; though argumentative, he was modest; though inflexible, he was candid; and though metaphysical, yet orthodox[1]."

On Friday, March 30, I dined with him at Sir Joshua Reynolds's, with the Earl of Charlemont, Sir Annesley Stewart, Mr. Eliot of Port-Eliot, Mr. Burke, Dean Marlay, Mr. Langton; a most agreeable day, of which I regret that every circumstance is not preserved: but it is unreasonable to require such a multiplication of felicity.

Mr. Eliot, with whom Dr. Walter Harte[2] had travelled, talked to us of his "History of Gustavus Adolphus," which he said was a very good book in the German translation. JOHNSON. "Harte was

[1] "London Chronicle," May 2, 1769. This respectable man is there mentioned to have died on the 3d of April, that year, at Coffleet, the seat of Thomas Veale, Esq. in his way to London.—BOSWELL.

[2] [Mr. Eliot had accompanied Mr. Stanhope, the natural son of Lord Chesterfield, for whom the celebrated letters were written, and is frequently mentioned in them. Mr. Harte was travelling tutor to both these young gentlemen: see *ante*, vol. i. p. 378.—ED.]

excessively vain. He put copies of his book in manuscript into the hands of Lord Chesterfield and Lord Granville, that they might revise it. Now how absurd was it to suppose that two such noblemen would revise so big a manuscript! Poor man! he left London the day of the publication of his book, that he might be out of the way of the great praise he was to receive; and he was ashamed to return when he found how ill his book had succeeded. It was unlucky in coming out on the same day with Robertson's 'History of Scotland.' His husbandry, however, is good." BOSWELL. "So he was fitter for that than for heroick history: he did well, when he turned his sword into a ploughshare."

Mr. Eliot mentioned a curious liquor peculiar to his country, which the Cornish fishermen drink. They call it *mahogany;* and it is made of two parts gin and one part treacle, well beaten together. I begged to have some of it made, which was done with proper skill by Mr. Eliot. I thought it very good liquor; and said it was a counterpart of what is called *Athol porridge* in the Highlands of Scotland, which is a mixture of whiskey and honey. Johnson said, "that must be a better liquor than the Cornish, for both its component parts are better." He also observed, "*Mahogany* must be a modern name; for it is not long since the wood called mahogany was known in this country." I mentioned his scale of liquors[1]:—claret for boys,—port for men,—brandy for heroes. "Then," said Mr. Burke, "let me have claret: I love to be a boy; to have the careless gayety of boyish days." JOHNSON. "I should drink claret too, if it would give me that; but it does not: it neither makes boys men, nor men boys. You 'll

[1] [See *ante*, p. 252.—ED.]

be drowned[1] by it before it has any effect upon you."

I ventured to mention a ludicrous paragraph in the newspapers, that Dr. Johnson was learning to dance of Vestris. Lord Charlemont, wishing to excite him to talk, proposed, in a whisper, that he should be asked whether it was true. "Shall I ask him?" said his lordship. We were, by a great majority, clear for the experiment. Upon which his lordship very gravely, and with a courteous air, said, "Pray, sir, is it true that you are taking lessons of Vestris?" This was risking a good deal, and required the boldness of a general of Irish volunteers to make the attempt. Johnson was at first startled, and in some heat answered, "How can your lordship ask so simple a question?" But immediately recovering himself, whether from unwillingness to be deceived or to appear deceived, or whether from real good humour, he kept up the joke: "Nay, but if any body were to answer the paragraph, and contradict it, I'd have a reply, and would say, that he who contradicted it was no friend either to Vestris or me. For why should not Dr. Johnson add to his other powers a little corporeal agility? Socrates learnt to dance at an advanced age, and Cato learnt Greek at an advanced age. Then it might proceed to say, that this Johnson, not content with dancing on the ground, might dance on the rope; and they might introduce the elephant dancing on the rope. A nobleman[2] wrote a play called 'Love in a Hollow Tree.' He

[1] [See *ante*, p. 252.—ED.]

[2] William, the first Viscount Grimston. [Lord Charlemont was far from being pleased with Mr. Boswell's having published this conversation. "His lordship thought the whole plan of Mr. Boswell's work incompatible with the freedom and indeed sacredness of social intercourse."—*Hardy's Life of Charlemont*, vol. i. p. 401. Without stopping here to discuss Lord Charlemont's principle, the Editor may observe that Mr. Hardy represents Lord Charlemont as having felt some *personal* dissatisfaction on this occasion, for which surely there was not much reason.—ED.]

found out that it was a bad one, and therefore wished to buy up all the copies and burn them. The Duchess of Marlborough had kept one; and when he was against her at an election, she had a new edition of it printed, and prefixed to it, as a frontispiece, an elephant dancing on a rope, to show that his lordship's writing comedy was as awkward as an elephant dancing on a rope."

[Dr. Johnson was always jealous of his reputation for personal activity, and sometimes exhibited it with very strange vehemence. One day when he saw Mr. Thrale leap over a cabriolet stool, to show that he was not tired after a chase of fifty miles or more, *he* suddenly jumped over it too; but in a way so strange and so unwieldy, that our terror, lest he should break his bones, took from us even the power of laughing.] [Miss Reynolds relates that Dr. Johnson was very ambitious of excelling in common acquirements, as well as the uncommon, and particularly in feats of activity. One day, as he was walking in Gunisbury Park (or Paddock) with some gentlemen and ladies, who were admiring the extraordinary size of some of the trees, one of the gentlemen remarked that, when he was a boy, he made nothing of climbing (*swarming*, she thought was the phrase) the largest there. "Why, I can swarm it now," replied Dr. Johnson, which excited a hearty laugh—(he was then between fifty and sixty); on which he ran to the tree, clung round the trunk, and ascended to the branches, and, Miss Reynolds believes, would have gone in amongst them, had he not been very earnestly entreated to descend, and down he came with a triumphant air, seeming *to make nothing of it.*

Piozzi, p. 4.

Reyn. Recoll. p. 81.

At another time, at a gentleman's seat in Devonshire, as he and some company were sitting in a

Reyn. Recoll.

saloon, before which was a spacious lawn, it was remarked as a very proper place for running a race. A young lady present boasted that she could outrun any person; on which Dr. Johnson rose up and said, "Madam, you cannot outrun me;" and, going out on the lawn, they started. The lady at first had the advantage; but Dr. Johnson happening to have slippers on much too small for his feet, kicked them off up into the air, and ran a great length without them, leaving the lady far behind him, and, having won the victory, he returned, leading her by the hand, with looks of high exultation and delight[1].]

On Sunday, April 1, I dined with him at Mr. Thrale's, with Sir Philip Jennings Clerk[2] and Mr. Perkins[3], who had the superintendence of Mr. Thrale's brewery, with a salary of five hundred pounds a year. Sir Philip had the appearance of a gentleman of ancient family, well advanced in life. He wore his own white hair in a bag of goodly size, a black velvet coat, with an embroidered waistcoat, and very rich laced ruffles; which Mrs. Thrale said were old fashioned, but which, for that reason, I thought the more respectable, more like a tory; yet Sir Philip was then in opposition in parliament. "Ah, sir," said Johnson, "ancient ruffles and modern principles do not agree." Sir Philip defended the opposition to the American war ably and with temper, and I joined him. He said the majority of the nation was against the ministry. JOHNSON. "*I*, sir, am against the ministry; but it is for having too little of that of which opposition thinks they

[1] [This exhibition occurred during his visit to Devonshire in 1762, at the house of the lady to whom he made the avowal mentioned *ante*, vol. i. p. 368. —ED.]

[2] [Sir P. J. Clerk, Bart., member for Totness in several parliaments, was, at this time, in very active opposition to the government.—ED.]

[3] [See vol. iii. p. 162.—ED.]

have too much. Were I minister, if any man wagged his finger against me, he should be turned out; for that which it is in the power of government to give at pleasure to one or to another should be given to the supporters of government. If you will not oppose at the expense of losing your place, your opposition will not be honest, you will feel no serious grievance; and the present opposition is only a contest to get what others have. Sir Robert Walpole acted as I would do. As to the American war, the *sense* of the nation is *with* the ministry. The majority of those who can *understand* is with it; the majority of those who can only *hear* is against it; and as those who can only hear are more numerous than those who can understand, and opposition is always loudest, a majority of the rabble will be for opposition."

This boisterous vivacity entertained us; but the truth in my opinion was that those who could understand the best were against the American war, as almost every man now is, when the question has been coolly considered.

Mrs. Thrale gave high praise to Mr. Dudley Long[1] (now North). JOHNSON. "Nay, my dear lady, don't talk so. Mr. Long's character is very *short*. It is nothing. He fills a chair. He is a man of genteel appearance, and that is all[2]. I know nobody who blasts by praise as you do: for whenever there is exaggerated praise, every body is set against a character. They are provoked to attack it. Now

[1] [See *ante*, p. 444.—ED.]

[2] Here Johnson condescended to play upon the words *Long* and *short*. But little did he know that, owing to Mr. Long's reserve in his presence, he was talking thus of a gentleman distinguished amongst his acquaintance for acuteness of wit; and to whom, I think, the French expression, "*Il petille d'esprit*," is particularly suited. He has gratified me by mentioning that he heard Dr. Johnson say, "Sir, if I were to lose Boswell it would be a limb amputated." —BOSWELL.

there is Pepys[1]: you praised that man with such disproportion, that I was incited to lessen him, perhaps more than he deserves. His blood is upon your head. By the same principle, your malice defeats itself; for your censure is too violent. And yet (looking to her with a leering smile) she is the first woman in the world, could she but restrain that wicked tongue of hers;—she would be the only woman, could she but command that little whirligig."

Ed. [Between Johnson and Pepys there was no cordiality, and Johnson's dislike was certainly increased, if not caused, by some degree of jealousy at the regard which Mrs. Thrale had for Pepys; and as the latter would not tamely submit to Johnson's violence, there were sometimes stormy scenes between them.] [On one occasion, when he had provoked Mr. Pepys, till something much too like a quarrel was grown up between them, the moment he was gone, "Now," says Dr. Johnson, "is Pepys gone home hating me, who love him better than I did before. He spoke in defence of his dead friend; but though I hope *I* spoke better who spoke against him, yet all my eloquence will gain me nothing but an honest man for my enemy!" He did not, however, cordially love Mr. Pepys, though he respected his abilities. "I knew the dog was a scholar," said he, when they had been disputing about the classics for three hours together one morning at Streatham; "but that he had so much taste and so much know-

Piozzi Anec. p. 109.

[1] William Weller Pepys, esq., one of the masters in the high court of chancery, and well known in polite circles. My acquaintance with him is not sufficient to enable me to speak of him from my own judgment. But I know that both at Eton and Oxford he was the intimate friend of the late Sir James Macdonald, the *Marcellus* of Scotland, whose extraordinary talents, learning, and virtues will ever be remembered with admiration and regret.—Boswell. [See *ante*, vol. ii. p. 150.—Ed.]

ledge I did *not* believe: I might have taken Barnard's word though, for Barnard would not lie."]

Upon the subject of exaggerated praise I took the liberty to say, that I thought there might be very high praise given to a known character which deserved it, and therefore it would not be exaggerated. Thus, one might say of Mr. Edmund Burke, he is a very wonderful man. JOHNSON. "No, sir, you would not be safe, if another man had a mind perversely to contradict. He might answer, 'Where is all the wonder? Burke is, to be sure, a man of uncommon abilities; with a great quantity of matter in his mind, and a great fluency of language in his mouth. But we are not to be stunned and astonished by him.' So you see, sir, even Burke would suffer, not from any fault of his own, but from your folly[1]."

Mrs. Thrale mentioned a gentleman who had acquired a fortune of four thousand a year in trade, but was absolutely miserable because he could not talk in company; so miserable, that he was impelled to lament his situation in the street to ******, whom he hates, and who he knows despises him. "I am a most unhappy man," said he. "I am invited to *conversations;* I go to *conversations;* but, alas! I have no conversation." JOHNSON. "Man commonly cannot be successful in different ways. This gentleman has spent, in getting four thousand pounds a year, the time in which he might have learnt to talk; and now he cannot talk." Mr. Perkins made a shrewd and droll remark: "If he had got his four thousand a year as a mountebank, he might have learnt to talk at the same time that he was getting his fortune."

[1] [This is a fresh instance (see *ante*, 29th March, 1776) of Johnson's contradicting his own assertions when another person ventured to repeat them. Boswell's supposed *folly* was saying exactly the same thing that Johnson had said to him on the 20th March, 1776. *Ante*, vol. iii. 337.—ED.]

Some other gentlemen came in. The conversation concerning the person [1] whose character Dr. Johnson had treated so slightingly, as he did not know his merit, was resumed. Mrs. Thrale said, "You think so of him, sir, because he is quiet, and does not exert himself with force. You'll be saying the same thing of Mr. ***** there, who sits as quiet." This was not well bred; and Johnson did not let it pass without correction. "Nay, madam, what right have you to talk thus? Both Mr. ***** and I have reason to take it ill. *You* may talk so of Mr. *****; but why do you make *me* do it? Have I said any thing against Mr. *****? You have *set* him, that I might shoot him: but I have not shot him."

One of the gentlemen said he had seen three folio volumes of Dr. Johnson's sayings collected by me. "I must put you right, sir," said I; "for I am very exact in authenticity. You could not see folio volumes, for I have none: you might have seen some in quarto and octavo. This is an inattention which one should guard against." JOHNSON. "Sir, it is a want of concern about veracity. He does not know that he saw *any* volumes. If he had seen them he could have remembered their size."

Mr. Thrale appeared very lethargick to-day. I saw him again on Monday evening, at which time he was not thought to be in immediate danger: but early in the morning of Wednesday the 4th he expired. Upon that day there was a *call* of the Literary Club; but Johnson apologised for his absence by the following note:

"Wednesday, [4th April.]

"Mr. Johnson knows that Sir Joshua Reynolds and the other gentlemen will excuse his incompliance with the call, when they are told that Mr. Thrale died this morning."

[1] [Mr. Dudley North.—ED.]

Johnson was in the house, and thus mentions the event:

[" Good Friday, 13th April, 1781. Pr. and Med. p. 187, 8.

"On Wednesday, 11th, was buried my dear friend Thrale, who died on Wednesday, 4th; and with him were buried many of my hopes and pleasures. About five, I think, on Wednesday morning he expired. I felt almost the last flutter of his pulse, and looked for the last time upon the face that for fifteen years had never been turned upon me but with respect or benignity [1]. Farewell. May God, that delighteth in mercy, have had mercy on thee!

"I had constantly prayed for him some time before his death.

"The decease of him, from whose friendship I had obtained many opportunities of amusement, and to whom I turned my thoughts as to a refuge from misfortunes, has left me heavy. But my business is with myself."]

[At a subsequent date he added, on the same paper, Ed.

" 18th September. Pr. and Med. p. 188.

"My first knowledge of Thrale was in 1765. I enjoyed his favour for almost a fourth part of my life."]

Mr. Thrale's death was a very essential loss to Johnson, who, although he did not foresee all that afterwards happened, was sufficiently convinced that the comforts which Mr. Thrale's family afforded him would now in a great measure cease. He, however, continued to show a kind attention to his widow and children as long as it was acceptable; and he took upon him, with a very earnest concern, the office of one of his executors; the importance of which seemed greater than usual to him, from his circumstances having been always such that he had scarcely any share in the real business of life. His

[1] Johnson's expressions on this occasion remind us of Isaac Walton's eulogy on Whitgift, in his Life of Hooker. "He lived to be present at the expiration of her (Queen Elizabeth's) last breath, and to behold the closing of those eyes that had long looked upon him with reverence and affection."—KEARNEY.

friends of the Club were in hopes that Mr. Thrale might have made a liberal provision for him for his life, which, as Mr. Thrale left no son and a very large fortune, it would have been highly to his honour to have done; and, considering Dr. Johnson's age, could not have been of long duration; but he bequeathed him only two hundred pounds, which was the legacy given to each of his executors. I could not but be somewhat diverted by hearing Johnson talk in a pompous manner of his new office, and particularly of the concerns of the brewery, which it was at last resolved should be sold. Lord Lucan tells a very good story, which, if not precisely exact, is certainly characteristical; that when the sale of Thrale's brewery was going forward, Johnson appeared bustling about, with an inkhorn and pen in his button-hole, like an exciseman; and on being asked what he really considered to be the value of the property which was to be disposed of, answered, "We are not here to sell a parcel of boilers and vats, but the potentiality of growing rich beyond the dreams of avarice."

[" TO MRS. THRALE.

Letters, vol. ii. p. 191.

" London, 5th April, 1781.

" DEAREST MADAM,—Of your injunctions to pray for you and write to you, I hope to leave neither unobserved; and I hope to find you willing in a short time to alleviate your trouble by some other exercise of the mind. I am not without my part of the calamity. No death since that of my wife has ever oppressed me like this. But let us remember that we are in the hands of Him who knows when to give and when to take away, who will look upon us with mercy through all our variations of existence, and who invites us to call on him in the day of trouble. Call upon him in this great revolution of life, and call with confidence. You will then find comfort for the past, and support for the future. He that has given you happiness in marriage, to a degree of which, without personal knowledge, I should have thought the description fabulous, can give you

another mode of happiness as a mother, and at last the happiness of losing all temporal cares in the thoughts of an eternity in heaven.

"I do not exhort you to reason yourself into tranquillity. We must first pray, and then labour; first implore the blessing of God, and those means which he puts into our hands. Cultivated ground has few weeds; a mind occupied by lawful business has little room for useless regret.

"We read the will to-day; but I will not fill my first letter with any account than that, with all my zeal for your advantage, I am satisfied; and that the other executors, more used to consider property than I, commended it for wisdom and equity. Yet why should I not tell you that you have five hundred pounds for your immediate expenses, and two thousand pounds a year, with both the houses, and all the goods?

"Let us pray for one another, that the time, whether long or short, that shall yet be granted us, may be well spent; and that when this life, which at the longest is very short, shall come to an end, a better may begin which shall never end."]

[The death of Mr. Thrale dissolved the friendship between him and Johnson; but it abated not in the latter that care for the interests of those whom his friend had left behind him, which he thought himself bound to cherish, as a living principle of gratitude. The favours he had received from Mr. Thrale were to be repaid by the exercise of kind offices towards his relict and her children, and these, circumstanced as Johnson was, could only be prudent counsels, friendly admonition to the one, and preceptive instruction to the others, both which he was ever ready to interpose. Nevertheless, it was observed by myself, and other of Johnson's friends, that, soon after the decease of Mr. Thrale, his visits to Streatham became less and less frequent, and that he studiously avoided the mention of the place or family. It seems that between him and the widow there was a formal taking of leave, for I find in his diary the following note:

Hawk. Apoph. p. 551, 552.

"April 5th, 1733.

"I took leave of Mrs. Thrale. I was much moved. I had some expostulations with her. She said that she was likewise affected. I commended the Thrales with great good-will to God. May my petitions have been heard!"]

On Friday, April 6, he carried me to dine at a club which, at his desire, had been lately formed at the Queen's Arms in St. Paul's Churchyard.

ED. [Their dining at a club on the next day but one after the loss of such a friend as Mr. Thrale appears at first sight so unfeeling, that it is but justice to insert extracts of letters to Mrs. Thrale, in which Johnson accounts for going into company at this period.]

Letters, vol. ii. p. 195. ["DR. JOHNSON TO MRS. THRALE.

"London, April 9th, 1781.

"DEAREST MADAM,—That you are gradually recovering your tranquillity is the effect to be humbly expected from trust in God. Do not represent life as darker than it is. Your loss has been very great, but you retain more than almost any other can hope to possess. You are high in the opinion of mankind; you have children from whom much pleasure may be expected; and that you will find many friends you have no reason to doubt. Of my friendship, be it more or less, I hope you think yourself certain, without much art or care. It will not be easy for me to repay the benefits that I have received; but I hope to be always ready at your call. Our sorrow has different effects: you are withdrawn into solitude, and I am driven into company. I am afraid of thinking what I have lost. I never had such a friend before. Let me have your prayers and those of my dear Queeney.

"The prudence and resolution of your design to return so soon to your business and your duty deserves great praise: I shall communicate it on Wednesday to the other executors."

["DR. JOHNSON TO MRS. THRALE.

p. 198. "DEAREST MADAM,—You will not suppose that much has happened since last night, nor indeed is this a time for talking much of loss and gain. The business of Christians is now for a few days in their own bosoms. God grant us to do it pro-

perly! I hope you gain ground on your affliction: I hope to overcome mine. You and Miss must comfort one another. May you long live happily together! I have nobody whom I expect to share my uneasiness; nor, if I could communicate it, would it be less. I give it little vent, and amuse it as I can. Let us pray for one another; and when we meet, we may try what fidelity and tenderness will do for us. Letters, vol. ii. p. 198.

"There is no wisdom in useless and hopeless sorrow; but there is something in it so like virtue, that he who is wholly without it cannot be loved, nor will, by me at least, be thought worthy of esteem."

He had told Mr. Hoole that he wished to have a City Club, and asked him to collect one; but, said he, "Don't let them be *patriots*." The company were to-day very sensible, well-behaved men. I have preserved only two particulars of his conversation. He said he was glad Lord George Gordon had escaped, rather than that a precedent should be established for hanging a man for *constructive treason*, which, in consistency with his true, manly, constitutional toryism, he considered would be a dangerous engine of arbitrary power. And upon its being mentioned that an opulent and very indolent Scotch nobleman, who totally resigned the management of his affairs to a man of knowledge and abilities, had claimed some merit by saying, "The next best thing to managing a man's own affairs well is being sensible of incapacity, and not attempting it, but having full confidence in one who can do it:"—JOHNSON. "Nay, sir, this is paltry. There is a middle course. Let a man give application; and depend upon it he will soon get above a despicable state of helplessness, and attain the power of acting for himself."

On Saturday, April 7, I dined with him at Mr. Hoole's with Governour Bouchier and Captain Orme, both of whom had been long in the East Indies; and, being men of good sense and observation, were very

entertaining. Johnson defended the oriental regulation of different *castes* of men [1], which was objected to as totally destructive of the hopes of rising in society by personal merit. He showed that there was a *principle* in it sufficiently plausible by analogy. "We see," said he, "in metals that there are different species; and so likewise in animals, though one species may not differ very widely from another, as, in the species of dogs, the cur, the spaniel, the mastiff. The Bramins are the mastiffs of mankind."

On Thursday, April 12, I dined with him at a bishop's, where were Sir Joshua Reynolds, Mr. Berenger, and some more company. He had dined the day before at another bishop's [2]. I have unfortunately recorded none of his conversation at the bishop's where we dined together: but I have preserved his ingenious defence of his dining twice abroad in Passion-week; a laxity in which I am convinced he would not have indulged himself at the time when he wrote his solemn paper in "The Rambler" upon that awful season. It appeared to me, that by being much more in company, and enjoying more luxurious living, he had contracted a keener relish for pleasure, and was consequently less rigorous in his religious rites. This he would not acknowledge; but he reasoned with admirable sophistry as follows: "Why, sir, a bishop's calling company together in this week

[1] Rajapouts, the military caste; the Bramins, pacifick and abstemious.—KEARNEY.

[2] [The only bishops at whose houses Johnson is recorded to have dined were Shipley of St. Asaph and Porteus of Chester, afterwards of London. By a letter *post*, April, 1782, it appears that he dined two consecutive days, in April, with the Bishops of St. Asaph's and Chester. It seems so unlikely that he should, in two succeeding Aprils, have dined successively with these two bishops, that the Editor suspected that the letter placed under the year 1782, but undated in Mrs. Piozzi's volume, really belonged to 1781, and referred to the dinners mentioned in the text; but the statement in that letter, that the second of May fell on a Thursday, fixes its date to 1782. The matter is of some little importance, for we had rather be assured that Bishop Porteus were not the bishop alluded to.—ED.]

is, to use the vulgar phrase, not *the thing*. But you must consider laxity is a bad thing; but preciseness is also a bad thing; and your general character may be more hurt by preciseness than by dining with a bishop in Passion-week. There might be a handle for reflection. It might be said, 'He refuses to dine with a bishop in Passion-week, but was three Sundays absent from church.'" BOSWELL. "Very true, sir. But suppose a man to be uniformly of good conduct, would it not be better that he should refuse to dine with a bishop in this week, and so not encourage a bad practice by his example?" JOHNSON. "Why, sir, you are to consider whether you might not do more harm by lessening the influence of a bishop's character by your disapprobation in refusing him, than by going to him."

"TO MRS. LUCY PORTER, IN LICHFIELD.

"London, 12th April, 1781.

"DEAR MADAM,—Life is full of troubles I have just lost my dear friend Thrale. I hope he is happy; but I have had a great loss. I am otherwise pretty well. I require some care of myself, but that care is not ineffectual; and when I am out of order, I think it often my own fault.

"The spring is now making quick advances. As it is the season in which the whole world is enlivened and invigorated, I hope that both you and I shall partake of its benefits. My desire is to see Lichfield; but being left executor to my friend, I know not whether I can be spared; but I will try, for it is now long since we saw one another; and how little we can promise ourselves many more interviews, we are taught by hourly examples of mortality. Let us try to live so as that mortality may not be an evil. Write to me soon, my dearest: your letters will give me great pleasure.

"I am sorry that Mr. Porter has not had his box; but by sending it to Mr. Mathias, who very readily undertook its conveyance, I did the best I could, and perhaps before now he has it.

"Be so kind as to make my compliments to my friends. I have a great value for their kindness, and hope to enjoy it before

summer is past. Do write to me. I am, dearest love, your most humble servant, "SAM. JOHNSON."

On Friday, April 13, being Good Friday, I went to St. Clement's church with him as usual. There I saw again his old fellow-collegian, Edwards, to whom I said, "I think, sir, Dr. Johnson and you meet only at church." "Sir," said he, "it is the best place we can meet in, except heaven, and I hope we shall meet there too." Dr. Johnson told me that there was very little communication between Edwards and him after their unexpected renewal of acquaintance. "But," said he, smiling, "he met me once and said, 'I am told you have written a very pretty book called "The Rambler."' I was unwilling that he should leave the world in total darkness, and sent him a set."

Mr. Berenger[1] visited him to-day, and was very pleasing. We talked of an evening society for conversation at a house in town, of which we were all members, but of which Johnson said, "It will never do, sir. There is nothing served about there; neither tea, nor coffee, nor lemonade, nor any thing whatever; and depend upon it, sir, a man does not love to go to a place from whence he comes out exactly as he went in." I endeavoured, for argument's sake, to maintain that men of learning and talents might have very good intellectual society, without the aid of any little gratifications of the senses. Berenger joined with Johnson, and said that without these any meeting would be dull and insipid. He would therefore have all the slight refreshments; nay, it would not be amiss to have some cold meat, and a

[1] Richard Berenger, Esq., many years gentleman of the horse to his present majesty, and authour of "The History and Art of Horsemanship," in two volumes, 4to. 1771.—MALONE. [See *ante*, vol. ii. p. 84, and vol. iv. p. 120. —ED.]

bottle of wine upon a sideboard. "Sir," said Johnson to me, with an air of triumph, "Mr. Berenger knows the world. Every body loves to have good things furnished to them without any trouble. I told Mrs. Thrale once, that, as she did not choose to have card-tables, she should have a profusion of the best sweetmeats, and she would be sure to have company enough come to her." I agreed with my illustrious friend upon this subject; for it has pleased God to make man a composite animal, and where there is nothing to refresh the body, the mind will languish.

On Sunday, April 15, being Easter-day, after solemn worship in St. Paul's church, I found him alone. Dr. Scott, of the Commons, came in. He talked of its having been said, that Addison wrote some of his best papers in "The Spectator" when warm with wine. Dr. Johnson did not seem willing to admit this. Dr. Scott, as a confirmation of it, related, that Blackstone, a sober man, composed his "Commentaries" with a bottle of port before him; and found his mind invigorated and supported in the fatigue of his great work, by a temperate use of it.

I told him, that in a company where I had lately been, a desire was expressed to know his authority for the shocking story of Addison's sending an execution into Steele's house[1]. "Sir," said he, "it is generally known; it is known to all who are acquainted with the literary history of that period: it is as well known as that he wrote 'Cato.' Mr. Thomas Sheridan once defended Addison to me, by alleging that he did it in order to cover Steele's goods from other creditors, who were going to seize them."

[1] [See *ante*, p. 421 *n.*—Ed.]

We talked of the difference between the mode of education at Oxford and that in those colleges where instruction is chiefly conveyed by lectures. JOHNSON. "Lectures were once useful; but now, when all can read, and books are so numerous, lectures are unnecessary. If your attention fails, and you miss a part of the lecture, it is lost; you cannot go back as you do upon a book." Dr. Scott agreed with him. "But yet," said I, "Dr. Scott, you yourself gave lectures at Oxford." He smiled. "You laughed," then said I, "at those who came to you."

Dr. Scott left us, and soon afterwards we went to dinner. Our company consisted of Mrs. Williams, Mrs. Desmoulins, Mr. Levett, Mr. Allen, the printer, (Mr. Macbean), and Mrs. Hall, sister of the Reverend Mr. John Wesley, and resembling him, as I thought, both in figure and manner. Johnson produced now, for the first time, some handsome silver salvers, which he told me he had bought fourteen years ago; so it was a great day. I was not a little amused by observing Allen perpetually struggling to talk in the manner of Johnson, like the little frog in the fable blowing himself up to resemble the stately ox.

I mentioned a kind of religious Robin-Hood society, which met every Sunday evening at Coachmakers'-hall, for free debate; and that the subject for this night was, the text which relates, with other miracles which happened at our Saviour's death, "And the graves were opened, and many bodies of the saints which slept arose, and came out of the graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many." Mrs. Hall said it was a very curious subject, and she should like to hear it discussed. JOHNSON (somewhat warmly). "One would not go to such a place to hear it,—one would not be seen in such a place—to give countenance to

Matth. xxvii.52

such a meeting." I, however, resolved that I would go. "But, sir," said she to Johnson, "I should like to hear *you* discuss it." He seemed reluctant to engage in it. She talked of the resurrection of the human race in general, and maintained that we shall be raised with the same bodies. JOHNSON. "Nay, madam, we see that it is not to be the same body; for the Scripture uses the illustration of grain sown, and we know that the grain which grows is not the same with what is sown. You cannot suppose that we shall rise with a diseased body; it is enough if there be such a sameness as to distinguish identity of person." She seemed desirous of knowing more, but he left the question in obscurity.

Of apparitions [1], he observed, "A total disbelief of them is adverse to the opinion of the existence of the soul between death and the last day; the question simply is, whether departed spirits ever have the power of making themselves perceptible to us: a man who thinks he has seen an apparition can only be convinced himself; his authority will not convince another; and his conviction, if rational, must be founded on being told something which cannot be known but by supernatural means."

He mentioned a thing as not unfrequent, of which

[1] As this subject frequently recurs in these volumes, the reader may be led erroneously to suppose that Dr. Johnson was so fond of such discussions as frequently to introduce them. But the truth is, that the authour himself delighted in talking concerning ghosts, and what he has frequently denominated the *mysterious*; and therefore took every opportunity of *leading* Johnson to converse on such subjects.—MALONE. The authour of this work was most undoubtedly fond of *the mysterious*, and perhaps upon some occasions may have directed the conversation to those topics, when they would not spontaneously have suggested themselves to Johnson's mind; but that *he* also had a love for speculations of that nature may be gathered from his writings throughout.—J. BOSWELL. [All this is very true, and we have seen (*ante*, vol. iii. p. 22 *n.*) that Mr. Boswell had some faith in *apparitions*; but the conversation of this particular evening might have arisen amongst men not at all inclined to the mysterious, from the mention of the subject which was that night to be debated at Coachmakers'-hall.—ED.]

I had never heard before,—being *called*, that is, hearing one's name pronounced by the voice of a known person at a great distance, far beyond the possibility of being reached by any sound uttered by human organs. "An acquaintance, on whose veracity I can depend, told me, that walking home one evening to Kilmarnock, he heard himself *called* from a wood, by the voice of a brother who had gone to America; and the next packet brought accounts of that brother's death." Macbean asserted that this inexplicable *calling* was a thing very well known. Dr. Johnson said, that one day at Oxford, as he was turning the key of his chamber, he heard his mother distinctly call—*Sam.* She was then at Lichfield; but nothing ensued. This phenomenon is, I think, as wonderful as any other mysterious fact, which many people are very slow to believe, or rather, indeed, reject with an obstinate contempt.

Piozzi, Anec. p. 148.

[It is probably another version of the same story to which Mrs. Piozzi alludes, when she says, "that at Brighthelmstone once, when Johnson was not present, Mr. Beauclerk asserted that he was afraid of spirits; and I, who was secretly offended at the charge, asked him, the first opportunity I could find, what ground he had ever given to the world for such a report? 'I can,' replied he, 'recollect nothing nearer it, than my telling Dr. Lawrence many years ago, that a long time after my poor mother's death I heard her voice call *Sam.*' 'What answer did the doctor make to your story, sir?' said I. 'None in the world,' replied he; and suddenly changed the conversation. Now as Dr. Johnson had a most unshaken faith, without any mixture of credulity, this story must either have been strictly true, or his persuasion of its truth the effect of disordered spirits. I relate the

anecdote precisely as he told it me; but could not prevail on him to draw out the talk into length for farther satisfaction of my curiosity."]

Some time after this, upon his making a remark which escaped my attention, Mrs. Williams and Mrs. Hall were both together striving to answer him. He grew angry, and called out loudly, "Nay, when you both speak at once, it is intolerable." But checking himself, and softening, he said, "This one may say, though you *are* ladies." Then he brightened into gay humour, and addressed them in the words of one of the songs in "The Beggar's Opera,"

"But two at a time there's no mortal can bear."

"What, sir," said I, "are you going to turn Captain Macheath?" There was something as pleasantly ludicrous in this scene as can be imagined. The contrast between Macheath, Polly, and Lucy—and Dr. Samuel Johnson, blind, peevish Mrs. Williams, and lean, lank, preaching Mrs. Hall, was exquisite.

I stole away to Coachmakers'-hall, and heard the difficult text of which we had talked, discussed with great decency, and some intelligence, by several speakers. There was a difference of opinion as to the appearance of ghosts in modern times, though the arguments for it, supported by Mr. Addison's authority, preponderated. The immediate subject of debate was embarrassed by the *bodies* of the saints having been said to rise, and by the question what became of them afterwards:—did they return again to their graves? or were they translated to heaven? Only one evangelist mentions the fact[1], and the commentators whom I have looked at do not make the passage clear. There is, however, no occasion for

[1] St. Matthew, chap. xxvii. v. 52, 53.—BOSWELL.

our understanding it farther than to know that it was one of the extraordinary manifestations of divine power which accompanied the most important event that ever happened.

On Friday, April 20, I spent with him one of the happiest days that I remember to have enjoyed in the whole course of my life. Mrs. Garrick, whose grief for the loss of her husband was, I believe, as sincere as wounded affection and admiration could produce, had this day, for the first time since his death, a select party of his friends to dine with her. The company was, Miss Hannah More, who lived with her, and whom she called her chaplain; Mrs. Boscawen, Mrs. Elizabeth Carter, Sir Joshua Reynolds, Dr. Burney, Dr. Johnson, and myself. We found ourselves very elegantly entertained at her house in the Adelphi, where I have passed many a pleasing hour with him "who gladdened life." She looked well, talked of her husband with complacency, and while she cast her eyes on his portrait, which hung over the chimney-piece, said, that "death was now the most agreeable object to her." The very semblance of David Garrick was cheering. Mr. Beauclerk, with happy propriety, inscribed under that fine portrait of him, which by Lady Diana's kindness is now the property of my friend Mr. Langton, the following passage from his beloved Shakspeare:

"———————— A merrier man,
Within the limit of becoming mirth,
I never spent an hour's talk withal.
His eye begets occasion for his wit;
For every object that the one doth catch
The other turns to a mirth-moving jest;
Which his fair tongue (Conceit's expositor)
Delivers in such apt and gracious words,
That aged ears play truant at his tales,
And younger hearings are quite ravished;
So sweet and voluble is his discourse [1]."

[1] [Rosaline's character of Biron. *Love's Labour Lost*, act 2, sc. 1.—ED.]

We were all in fine spirits; and I whispered to Mrs. Boscawen, "I believe this is as much as can be made of life." In addition to a splendid entertainment, we were regaled with Lichfield ale, which had a peculiar appropriate value. Sir Joshua, and Dr. Burney, and I, drank cordially of it to Dr. Johnson's health; and though he would not join us, he as cordially answered, "Gentlemen, I wish you all as well as you do me."

The general effect of this day dwells upon my mind in fond remembrance; but I do not find much conversation recorded. What I have preserved shall be faithfully given.

One of the company mentioned Mr. Thomas Hollis, the strenuous whig, who used to send over Europe presents of democratical books, with their boards stamped with daggers and caps of liberty. Mrs. Carter said, "He was a bad man: he used to talk uncharitably." JOHNSON. "Poh! poh! madam; who is the worse for being talked of very uncharitably? Besides, he was a dull poor creature as ever lived: and I believe he would not have done harm to a man whom he knew to be of very opposite principles to his own. I remember once at the Society of Arts, when an advertisement was to be drawn up, he pointed me out as the man who could do it best. This, you will observe, was kindness to me. I however slipt away and escaped it."

Mrs. Carter having said of the same person, "I doubt he was an atheist:" JOHNSON. "I don't know that. He might, perhaps, have become one, if he had had time to ripen (smiling). He might have *exuberated* into an atheist."

Sir Joshua Reynolds praised "Mudge's [1] Sermons."

[1] [See page 447 of this volume.—ED.]

JOHNSON. "Mudge's Sermons are good, but not practical. He grasps more sense than he can hold; he takes more corn than he can make into meal; he opens a wide prospect, but it is so distant, it is indistinct. I love 'Blair's Sermons.' Though the dog is a Scotchman, and a presbyterian, and every thing he should not be, I was the first to praise them. Such was my candour" (smiling). MRS. BOSCAWEN. "Such his great merit, to get the better of all your prejudices." JOHNSON. "Why, madam, let us compound the matter; let us ascribe it to my candour, and his merit."

In the evening we had a large company in the drawing-room; several ladies, the Bishop of Killaloe, [Dr. Barnard] Dr. Percy, Mr. Chamberlayne of the treasury, &c. &c. Somebody said, the life of a mere literary man could not be very entertaining. JOHNSON. "But it certainly may. This is a remark which has been made, and repeated, without justice. Why should the life of a literary man be less entertaining than the life of any other man? Are there not as interesting varieties in such a life? As *a literary life* it may be very entertaining." BOSWELL. "But it must be better surely when it is diversified with a little active variety—such as his having gone to Jamaica;—or—his having gone to the Hebrides." Johnson was not displeased at this.

Talking of a very respectable authour, he told us a curious circumstance in his life, which was, that he had married a printer's devil. REYNOLDS. "A printer's devil, sir! why, I thought a printer's devil was a creature with a black face and in rags." JOHNSON. "Yes, sir. But I suppose he had her face washed, and put clean clothes on her. (Then looking very serious, and very earnest) And she did not disgrace him;—the woman had a bottom of good

sense." The word *bottom* thus introduced was so ludicrous when contrasted with his gravity, that most of us could not forbear tittering and laughing; though I recollect that the Bishop of Killaloe kept his countenance with perfect steadiness, while Miss Hannah More slyly hid her face behind a lady's back who sat on the same settee with her His pride could not bear that any expression of his should excite ridicule, when he did not intend it: he therefore resolved to assume and exercise despotick power, glanced sternly around, and called out in a strong tone, "Where's the merriment?" Then collecting himself, and looking awful, to make us feel how he could impose restraint, and as it were searching his mind for a still more ludicrous word, he slowly pronounced, "I say the *woman* was *fundamentally* sensible;" as if he had said, hear this now, and laugh if you dare. We all sat composed as at a funeral[1].

He and I walked away together; we stopped a little while by the rails of the Adelphi, looking on the Thames, and I said to him with some emotion, that I was now thinking of two friends we had lost, who once lived in the buildings behind us, Beauclerk and Garrick. "Ay, sir, (said he, tenderly), and two such friends as cannot be supplied."

For some time after this day I did not see him very often, and of the conversation which I did enjoy, I am sorry to find I have preserved but little. I was at this time engaged in a variety of other matters which required exertion and assiduity, and necessarily occupied almost all my time.

One day having spoken very freely of those who were then in power, he said to me, "Between ourselves, sir, I do not like to give *Opposition* the satis-

[1] [The editor hopes that such a scene as this could not now occur in any respectable company.—Ed.]

faction of knowing how much I disapprove of the ministry." And when I mentioned that Mr. Burke had boasted how quiet the nation was in George the Second's reign, when whigs were in power, compared with the present reign, when tories governed;—"Why, sir," said he, "you are to consider that tories having more reverence for government, will not oppose with the same violence as whigs, who, being unrestrained by that principle, will oppose by any means."

This month he lost not only Mr. Thrale, but another friend, Mr. William Strahan, junior, printer, the eldest son of his old and constant friend, printer to his majesty.

"TO MRS. STRAHAN.

"23d April, 1781.

"DEAR MADAM,—The grief which I feel for the loss of a very kind friend is sufficient to make me know how much you suffer by the death of an amiable son: a man of whom I think it may be truly said, that no one knew him who does not lament him. I look upon myself as having a friend, another friend, taken from me.

"Comfort, dear madam, I would give you, if I could; but I know how little the forms of consolation can avail. Let me, however, counsel you not to waste your health in unprofitable sorrow, but go to Bath, and endeavour to prolong your own life; but when we have all done all that we can, one friend must in time lose the other. I am, dear madam, your most humble servant, "SAM. JOHNSON."

On Tuesday, May 8, I had the pleasure of again dining with him and Mr. Wilkes, at Mr. Dilly's. No *negotiation* was now required to bring them together; for Johnson was so well satisfied with the former interview, that he was very glad to meet Wilkes again, who was this day seated between Dr. Beattie and Dr. Johnson; (between *Truth*[1] and

[1] [In allusion to Dr. Beattie's Essay on *Truth*.—ED.]

Reason, as General Paoli said, when I told him of it.) WILKES. "I have been thinking, Dr. Johnson, that there should be a bill brought into parliament that the controverted elections for Scotland should be tried in that country, at their own Abbey of Holyrood-house, and not here; for the consequence of trying them here is, that we have an inundation of Scotchmen, who come up and never go back again. Now here is Boswell, who is come upon the election for his own county, which will not last a fortnight." JOHNSON. "Nay, sir, I see no reason why they should be tried at all; for, you know, one Scotchman is as good as another." WILKES. "Pray, Boswell, how much may be got in a year by an advocate at the Scotch bar?" BOSWELL. "I believe, two thousand pounds." WILKES. "How can it be possible to spend that money in Scotland?" JOHNSON. "Why, sir, the money may be spent in England; but there is a harder question. If one man in Scotland gets possession of two thousand pounds, what remains for all the rest of the nation?" WILKES. "You know, in the last war, the immense booty which Thurot carried off by the complete plunder of seven Scotch isles; he re-embarked with *three and sixpence*." Here again Johnson and Wilkes joined in extravagant sportive raillery upon the supposed poverty of Scotland, which Dr. Beattie and I did not think it worth our while to dispute.

The subject of quotation being introduced, Mr. Wilkes censured it as pedantry. JOHNSON. "No, sir, it is a good thing; there is a community of mind in it. Classical quotation is the *parole* of literary men all over the world." WILKES. "Upon the continent they all quote the vulgate Bible. Shakspeare is chiefly quoted here; and we quote also Pope, Prior, Butler, Waller, and sometimes Cowley."

We talked of letter-writing. JOHNSON. "It is now become so much the fashion to publish letters that, in order to avoid it, I put as little into mine as I can." BOSWELL. "Do what you will, sir, you cannot avoid it. Should you even write as ill as you can, your letters would be published as curiosities:

> 'Behold a miracle! instead of wit,
> See two dull lines with Stanhope's pencil writ.'"

He gave us an entertaining account of Bet Flint, a woman of the town, who, with some eccentrick talents and much effrontery, forced herself upon his acquaintance. "Bet," said he, "wrote her own Life in verse [1], which she brought to me, wishing that I would furnish her with a preface to it (laughing). I used to say of her, that she was generally slut and drunkard;—occasionally whore and thief. She had, however, genteel lodgings, a spinnet on which she played, and a boy that walked before her chair. Poor Bet was taken up on a charge of stealing a counterpane, and tried at the Old Bailey. Chief Justice [Willes,] who loved a wench, summed up favourably, and she was acquitted [2]. After which, Bet said, with a

[1] Johnson, whose memory was wonderfully retentive, remembered the first four lines of this curious production, which have been communicated to me by a young lady of his acquaintance:

> "When first I drew my vital breath,
> A little minikin I came upon earth;
> And then I came from a dark abode,
> Into this gay and gaudy world."—BOSWELL.

[2] The account which Johnson had received on this occasion was not quite accurate. Bet was tried at the Old Bailey in September, 1750, not by the chief justice [Willes.—ED.] here alluded to (who however tried another cause on the same day), but before Sir William Moreton, recorder; and she was acquitted, not in consequence of any *favourable summing up* of the judge, but because the prosecutrix, Mary Walthow, could not prove that the goods charged to have been stolen (a counterpane, a silver spoon, two napkins, &c.) were her property. Bet does not appear to have lived at that time in a very *genteel* style; for she paid for her ready-furnished *room* in Meard's-court, Dean-street, Soho, from which these articles were alleged to be stolen, only *five shillings* a week. Mr. James Boswell took the trouble to examine the sessions paper to ascertain these particulars.—MALONE.

gay and satisfied air, 'Now that the counterpane is *my own*, I shall make a petticoat of it.'"

Talking of oratory, Mr. Wilkes described it as accompanied with all the charms of poetical expression. JOHNSON. "No, sir; oratory is the power of beating down your adversary's arguments, and putting better in their place." WILKES. "But this does not move the passions." JOHNSON. "He must be a weak man who is to be so moved." WILKES (naming a celebrated orator). "Amidst all the brilliancy of ——'s [1] imagination, and the exuberance of his wit, there is a strange want of *taste*. It was observed of Apelles's Venus [2], that her flesh seemed as if she had been nourished by roses: his oratory would sometimes make one suspect that he eats potatoes and drinks whiskey."

Mr. Wilkes observed, how tenacious we are of forms in this country; and gave as an instance, the vote of the house of commons for remitting money to pay the army in America in Portugal pieces, when, in reality, the remittance is made not in Portugal money, but in our specie. JOHNSON. "Is there not a law, sir, against exporting the current coin of the realm?" WILKES. "Yes, sir; but might not the house of commons, in case of real evident necessity, order our own current coin to be sent into our own colonies?" Here Johnson, with that quickness of recollection which distinguished him so eminently, gave the Middlesex patriot an admirable retort upon his own ground. "Sure, sir, *you* don't think a *resolution of the house of commons* equal to *the law of the land*." WILKES (at once perceiving the application). "God

[1] [Mr. Burke's.—ED.]

[2] Mr. Wilkes mistook the objection of Euphranor to the Theseus of Parrhasius for a description of the Venus of Apelles. Vide *Plutarch*. "Bellone an pace clariores Athenienses."—KEARNEY. ["Euphranor, comparing his own representation of Theseus with that by Parrhasius, said that the latter looked as if the hero had been fed on *roses*, but that his showed that he had lived on *beef*." *Plut. Xyl.* v. ii. p. 516.—ED.]

forbid, sir."—To hear what had been treated with such violence in "The False Alarm" now turned into pleasant repartee, was extremely agreeable. Johnson went on:—"Locke observes well, that a prohibition to export the current coin is impolitick; for when the balance of trade happens to be against a state, the current coin *must* be exported."

Mr. Beauclerk's great library was this season sold in London by auction. Mr. Wilkes said, he wondered to find in it such a numerous collection of sermons: seeming to think it strange that a gentleman of Mr. Beauclerk's character in the gay world should have chosen to have many compositions of that kind. JOHNSON. "Why, sir, you are to consider, that sermons make a considerable branch of English literature; so that a library must be very imperfect if it has not a numerous collection of sermons[1]: and in

[1] Mr. Wilkes probably did not know that there is in an English sermon the most comprehensive and lively account of that entertaining faculty for which he himself was so much admired. It is in Dr. Barrow's first volume, and fourteenth sermon, "Against foolish Talking and Jesting." My old acquaintance, the late Corbyn Morris, in his ingenious "Essay on Wit, Humour, and Ridicule," calls it "a *profuse* description of wit:" but I do not see how it could be curtailed, without leaving out some good circumstance of discrimination. As it is not generally known, and may perhaps dispose some to read sermons, from which they may receive real advantage, while looking only for entertainment, I shall here subjoin it.

"But first (says the learned preacher) it may be demanded, what the thing we speak of is? Or what this facetiousness (or *wit*, as he calls it before) doth import? To which questions I might reply, as Democritus did to him that asked the definition of a man, 'Tis that which we all see and know.' Any one better apprehends what it is by acquaintance than I can inform him by description. It is, indeed, a thing so versatile and multiform, appearing in so many shapes, so many postures, so many garbs, so variously apprehended by several eyes and judgments, that it seemeth no less hard to settle a clear and certain notion thereof, than to make a portrait of Proteus, or to define the figure of the fleeting air. Sometimes it lieth in pat allusion to a known story, or in seasonable application of a trivial saying, or in forging an apposite tale; sometimes it playeth in words and phrases, taking advantage from the ambiguity of their sense, or the affinity of their sound: sometimes it is wrapped in a dress of humorous expression: sometimes it lurketh under an odd similitude: sometimes it is lodged in a sly question, in a smart answer, in a quirkish reason, in a shrewd intimation, in cunningly diverting or cleverly retorting an objection: sometimes it is couched in a bold scheme of speech, in a tart irony, in a lusty hyperbole, in a startling metaphor, in a plausible reconciling of contradictions, or in acute nonsense: sometimes a scenical representation of persons or things, a counterfeit speech, a mimical look or gesture, passeth for it: sometimes an affected simplicity, sometimes a presumptuous bluntness giveth it being: sometimes it riseth only from

all collections, sir, the desire of augmenting them grows stronger in proportion to the advance in acquisition; as motion is accelerated by the continuance of the *impetus*. Besides, sir," looking at Mr. Wilkes, with a placid but significant smile, "a man may collect sermons with intention of making himself better by them. I hope Mr. Beauclerk intended that some time or other that should be the case with him."

Mr. Wilkes said to me, loud enough for Dr. Johnson to hear, "Dr. Johnson should make me a present of his 'Lives of the Poets,' as I am a poor patriot, who cannot afford to buy them." Johnson seemed to take no notice of this hint; but in a little while he called to Mr. Dilly, "Pray, sir, be so good as to send a set of my Lives to Mr. Wilkes, with my compliments." This was accordingly done; and Mr. Wilkes paid Dr. Johnson a visit, was courteously received, and sat with him a long time.

The company gradually dropped away. Mr. Dilly himself was called down stairs upon business; I left the room for some time; when I returned, I was

a lucky hitting upon what is strange: sometimes from a crafty wresting obvious matter to the purpose. Often it consisteth in one knows not what, and springeth up one can hardly tell how. Its ways are unaccountable and inexplicable; being answerable to the numberless rovings of fancy and windings of language. It is, in short, a manner of speaking out of the simple and plain way (such as reason teacheth and proveth things by), which, by a pretty surprising uncouthness in conceit or expression, doth affect and amuse the fancy, stirring in it some wonder, and breeding some delight thereto. It raiseth admiration, as signifying a nimble sagacity of apprehension, a special felicity of invention, a vivacity of spirit, and reach of wit more than vulgar; it seeming to argue a rare quickness of parts, that one can fetch in remote conceits applicable; a notable skill, that he can dexterously accommodate them to the purpose before him: together with a lively briskness of humour, not apt to damp those sportful flashes of imagination. (Whence in Aristotle such persons are termed ευτραπελοι, dexterous men, and ευτροποι, men of facile or versatile manners, who can easily turn themselves to all things, or turn all things to themselves.) It also procureth delight, by gratifying curiosity with its rareness, as semblance of difficulty: (as monsters, not for their beauty, but their rarity; as juggling tricks, not for their use, but their abstruseness, are beheld with pleasure:) by diverting the mind from its road of serious thoughts; by instilling gayety and airiness of spirit; by provoking to such dispositions of spirit in way of emulation or complaisance; and by seasoning matters, otherwise distasteful or insipid, with an unusual and thence grateful tang."—BOSWELL.

struck with observing Dr. Samuel Johnson and John Wilkes, Esq. literally *tête-à-tête;* for they were reclined upon their chairs, with their heads leaning almost close to each other, and talking earnestly, in a kind of confidential whisper, of the personal quarrel between George the Second and the King of Prussia. Such a scene of perfectly easy sociality between two such opponents in the war of political controversy, as that which I now beheld, would have been an excellent subject for a picture. It presented to my mind the happy days which are foretold in Scripture, when the lion shall lie down with the kid [1].

After this day there was another pretty long interval, during which Dr. Johnson and I did not meet. When I mentioned it to him with regret, he was pleased to say, "Then, sir, let us live double."

About this time it was much the fashion for several ladies to have evening assemblies, where the fair sex might participate in conversation with literary and ingenious men, animated by a desire to please. These societies were denominated *Blue-stocking Clubs;* the origin of which title being little known, it may be worth while to relate it. One of the most eminent members of those societies, when they first commenced, was Mr. Stillingfleet [2], whose dress was remarkably grave, and in particular it was observed that he wore blue stockings. Such was the excellence of his conversation, that his absence was felt as so great a loss, that it used to be said, "We can do nothing without the *blue stockings;*"

When I mentioned this to the Bishop of Killalee, [Dr. Barnard,] "With the *goat*," said his lordship. Such, however, was the engaging politeness and pleasantry of Mr. Wilkes, and such the social good humour of the bishop, that when they dined together at Mr. Dilly's, where I also was, they were mutually agreeable.—BOSWELL.

[2] Mr. Benjamin Stillingfleet, authour of tracts relating to natural history, &c. —BOSWELL.

and thus by degrees the title was established. Miss Hannah More has admirably described a *Blue-stocking Club* in her "*Bas Bleu*," a poem in which many of the persons who were most conspicuous there are mentioned.

Johnson was prevailed with to come sometimes into these circles, and did not think himself too grave even for the lively Miss Monckton[1] (now Countess of Corke), who used to have the finest *bit of blue* at the house of her mother, Lady Galway. Her vivacity enchanted the sage, and they used to talk together with all imaginable ease. A singular instance happened one evening, when she insisted that some of Sterne's writings were very pathetick. Johnson bluntly denied it. "I am sure," said she, "they have affected *me*." "Why," said Johnson, smiling, and rolling himself about, "that is because, dearest, you 're a dunce." When she some time afterwards mentioned this to him, he said, with equal truth and politeness, "Madam, if I had thought so, I certainly should not have said it."

Another evening Johnson's kind indulgence towards me had a pretty difficult trial. I had dined at the Duke of Montrose's with a very agreeable party; and his grace, according to his usual custom, had circulated the bottle very freely. Lord Graham and I went together to Miss Monckton's, where I certainly was in extraordinary spirits, and above all fear or awe. In the midst of a great number of persons of the first rank, amongst whom I recollect, with confusion, a noble lady of the most stately decorum, I placed myself next to Johnson, and thinking myself now fully his match, talked to him in a loud and boisterous manner, desirous to let the company know

[1] [See *ante*, p. 307, *n.*—Ed.]

how I could contend with *Ajax*. I particularly remember pressing him upon the value of the pleasures of the imagination, and, as an illustration of my argument, asking him, "What, sir, supposing I were to fancy that the —— (naming the most charming duchess in his majesty's dominions) were in love with me, should I not be very happy?" My friend with much address evaded my interrogatories, and kept me as quiet as possible; but it may easily be conceived how he must have felt[1]. However, when a few days afterwards I waited upon him and made an apology, he behaved with the most friendly gentleness.

While I remained in London this year, Johnson and I dined together at several places. I recollect a placid day at Dr. Butter's[2], who had now removed

[1] Next day I endeavoured to give what had happened the most ingenious turn I could by the following verses:

TO THE HONOURABLE MISS MONCKTON.

Not that with th' excellent Montrose
I had the happiness to dine;
Not that I late from table rose,
From Graham's wit, from generous wine.

It was not these alone which led
On sacred manners to encroach;
And made me feel what most I dread,
Johnson's just frown, and self-reproach.

But when I enter'd, not abash'd,
From your bright eyes were shot such rays,
At once intoxication flash'd,
And all my frame was in a blaze!

But not a brilliant blaze I own,
Of the dull smoke I 'm yet ashamed;
I was a dreary ruin grown,
And not enlighten'd, though inflamed.

Victim at once to wine and love,
I hope, Maria, you 'll forgive;
While I invoke the powers above,
That henceforth I may wiser live.

The lady was generously forgiving, returned me an obliging answer, and I thus obtained an *act of oblivion*, and took care never to offend again.—BOSWELL.

[2] [See *ante*, p. 12.—ED.]

from Derby to Lower Grosvenor-street, London; but of his conversation on that and other occasions during this period I neglected to keep any regular record, and shall therefore insert here some miscellaneous articles which I find in my Johnsonian notes.

His disorderly habits, when "making provision for the day that was passing over him," appear from the following anecdote, communicated to me by Mr. John Nichols: "In the year 1763 a young bookseller, who was an apprentice to Mr. Whiston, waited on him with a subscription to his 'Shakspeare;' and observing that the doctor made no entry in any book of the subscriber's name, ventured diffidently to ask whether he would please to have the gentleman's address, that it might be properly inserted in the printed list of subscribers. '*I shall print no list of subscribers,*' said Johnson, with great abruptness; but almost immediately recollecting himself, added, very complacently, 'Sir, I have two very cogent reasons for not printing any list of subscribers: one, that I have lost all the names; the other, that I have spent all the money.'"

Johnson could not brook appearing to be worsted in argument, even when he had taken the wrong side, to show the force and dexterity of his talents. When, therefore, he perceived that his opponent gained ground, he had recourse to some sudden mode of robust sophistry. Once when I was pressing upon him with visible advantage, he stopped me thus: "My dear Boswell, let's have no more of this; you'll make nothing of it. I'd rather have you whistle a Scotch tune."

Care, however, must be taken to distinguish between Johnson when he "talked for victory," and Johnson when he had no desire but to inform and illustrate. "One of Johnson's principal talents,"

says an eminent friend of his[1], "was shown in maintaining the wrong side of an argument, and in a splendid perversion of the truth. If you could contrive to have his fair opinion on a subject, and without any bias from personal prejudice, or from a wish to be victorious in argument, it was wisdom itself, not only convincing, but overpowering."

He had, however, all his life habituated himself to consider conversation as a trial of intellectual vigour and skill: and to this, I think, we may venture to ascribe that unexampled richness and brilliancy which appeared in his own. As a proof at once of his eagerness for colloquial distinction, and his high notion of this eminent friend, he once addressed him thus: "——, we now have been several hours together, and you have said but one thing for which I envied you[2]."

He disliked much all speculative desponding considerations, which tended to discourage men from diligence and exertion. He was in this like Dr. Shaw, the great traveller, who, Mr. Daines Barrington told me, used to say, "I hate a *cui bono* man." Upon being asked by a friend what he should think of a man who was apt to say *non est tanti;* "That he's a stupid fellow, sir," answered Johnson. "What would these *tanti* men be doing the while?" When I, in a low-spirited fit, was talking to him with indifference of the pursuits which generally engage us in a course of action, and inquiring a *reason* for taking so much trouble; "Sir," said he, in an animated tone, "it is driving on the system of life."

He told me that he was glad that I had, by General Oglethorp's means, become acquainted with Dr.

[1] The late Right Hon. William Gerrard Hamilton.—MALONE.

[2] [It seems a strange way of expressing a *high notion* of a man's powers in conversation to say, that "in several hours he had said but one good thing."—ED.]

Shebbeare. Indeed that gentleman, whatever objections were made to him, had knowledge and abilities much above the class of ordinary writers, and deserves to be remembered as a respectable name in literature, were it only for his admirable "Letters on the English Nation," under the name of "Battista Angeloni, a Jesuit."

Johnson and Shebbeare[1] were frequently named together, as having in former reigns had no predilection for the family of Hanover. The authour[2] of the celebrated "Heroick Epistle to Sir William Chambers" introduces them in one line[3], in a list of those "who tasted the sweets of his present majesty's reign." Such was Johnson's candid relish of the merit of that satire, that he allowed Dr. Goldsmith, as he told me, to read it to him from beginning to end, and did not refuse his praise to its execution.

Goldsmith could sometimes take adventurous liberties with him, and escape unpunished. Beauclerk told me, that when Goldsmith talked of a project for having a third theatre in London solely for the exhibition of new plays, in order to deliver authours from the supposed tyranny of managers, Johnson treated it slightingly, upon which Goldsmith said, "Ay, ay, this may be nothing to you, who can now shelter yourself behind the corner of a pension;" and Johnson bore this with good-humour.

Johnson praised the Earl of Carlisle's poems[4], which his lordship had published with his name, as not disdaining to be a candidate for literary fame.

[1] I recollect a ludicrous paragraph in the newspapers, that the king had pensioned both a *He*-bear and a *She*-bear.—BOSWELL. [See *ante*, vol. ii. p. 68. —ED.]

[2] [There can be no doubt that it was the joint production of Mason and Walpole; Mason supplying the poetry, and Walpole the points.—ED.]

[3] [See *ante*, vol. iv. p. 174, *n.*—ED.]

[4] [Frederic, fifth Earl of Carlisle, born in 1748; died in 1825.—ED.]

My friend was of opinion that when a man of rank appeared in that character, he deserved to have his merit handsomely allowed[1]. In this I think he was more liberal than Mr. William Whitehead, in his "Elegy to Lord Villiers," in which, under the pretext of "superiour toils, demanding all their care," he discovers a jealousy of the great paying their court to the Muses:

"——— to the chosen few
Who dare excel, thy fost'ring aid afford;
Their arts, their magick powers, with honours due
Exalt;—but be thyself what they record."

Johnson had called twice on [Dr. Barnard] the Bishop of Killaloe before his lordship set out for Ire-

[1] Men of rank and fortune, however, should be pretty well assured of having a real claim to the approbation of the publick, as writers, before they venture to stand forth. Dryden, in his preface to "All for Love," thus expresses himself:—"Men of pleasant conversation (at least esteemed so) and endued with a trifling kind of fancy, perhaps helped out by a smattering of Latin, are ambitious to distinguish themselves from the herd of gentlemen by their poetry:

'Rarus enim fermè sensus communis in illa
Fortuna.'———

And is not this a wretched affectation, not to be contented with what fortune has done for them, and sit down quietly with their estates, but they must call their wits in question, and needlessly expose their nakedness to publick view? Not considering that they are not to expect the same approbation from sober men which they have found from their flatterers after the third bottle: if a little glittering in discourse has passed them on us for witty men, where was the necessity of undeceiving the world? Would a man who has an ill title to an estate, but yet is in possession of it—would he bring it out of his own accord to be tried at Westminster? We who write, if we want the talents, yet have the excuse that we do it for a poor subsistence; but what can be urged in their defence, who, not having the vocation of poverty to scribble, out of mere wantonness take pains to make themselves ridiculous? Horace was certainly in the right where he said, 'That no man is satisfied with his own condition.' A poet is not pleased because he is not rich; and the rich are discontented because the poets will not admit them of their number."—BOSWELL. [Mr. Boswell seems to insinuate that Lord Carlisle had no claim to the approbation of the public as a writer, and that he exposed himself to ridicule by this publication; and Lord Byron, in one of those wayward fits which too often distorted the views of that extraordinary person, recorded the same opinion with the bitterness and exaggeration of a professed satirist. In these judgments the Editor cannot concur. Lord Carlisle was not, indeed, a *great poet*, but he was superior to many whom Mr. Boswell was ready enough to admit into the "sacred choir." His verses have good sense, sweetness, and elegance. It should be added, in justice both to Lord Carlisle and Lord Byron, that the latter very much regretted the flippant and unjust sarcasms he had uttered against his noble friend and relation.—ED.]

land, having missed him the first time. He said, "It would have hung heavy on my heart if I had not seen him. No man ever paid more attention to another than he has done to me; and I have neglected him, not wilfully, but from being otherwise occupied. Always, sir, set a high value on spontaneous kindness. He whose inclination prompts him to cultivate your friendship of his own accord, will love you more than one whom you have been at pains to attach to you."

This gave me very great pleasure, for there had been once a pretty smart altercation [1] between Dr. Barnard and him, upon a question, whether a man could improve himself after the age of forty-five; when Johnson in a hasty humour expressed himself in a manner not quite civil. Dr. Barnard made it the subject of a copy of pleasant verses, in which he supposed himself to learn different perfections from different men. The concluding stanza is a delicate irony [2] on Dr. Johnson.

I know not whether Johnson ever saw the poem, but I had occasion to find that, as Dr. Barnard and he knew each other better, their mutual regard increased [3].

[This, as Miss Reynolds remarks, was one of the few occasions in which Johnson appeared anxious to make atonement for conversational rudeness, and she adds the following account of it: ED.

"I shall never forget with what regret he spoke of the rude reply he made to Dr. Barnard, on his saying that men never improved after the age of Reyn. Recoll.

[1] [This incident took place about 1776.—ED.]

[2] [The Editor does not think the last stanza very happy, as it seems to mix up awkwardly enough truth and irony.—ED.]

[3] [This account of Dr. Johnson's rudeness to Dr. Barnard, Mr. Boswell had thrown into a note, and had quoted only the last stanza of the dean's poetical retaliation; but as an interesting incident in the history of Johnson's social life, the Editor has removed it to the text, and has added the whole anecdote from Miss Reynolds's *Recollections*.—ED.]

Reyn. Recoll. froty-five. 'That 's not true, sir,' said Johnson. 'You, who perhaps are forty-eight, may still improve, if you will try: I wish you would set about it; and I am afraid,' he added, 'there is great room for it;' and this was said in rather a large party of ladies and gentlemen at dinner. Soon after the ladies withdrew from the table, Dr. Johnson followed them, and, sitting down by the lady of the house[1], he said, 'I am very sorry for having spoken so rudely to the dean.' 'You very well may, sir.' 'Yes,' he said, 'it was highly improper to speak in that style to a minister of the gospel, and I am the more hurt on reflecting with what mild dignity he received it.' When the dean came up into the drawing-room, Dr. Johnson immediately rose from his seat, and made him sit on the sofa by him, and with such a beseeching look for pardon, and with such fond gestures—literally smoothing down his arms and his knees—tokens of penitence, which were so graciously received by the dean as to make Dr. Johnson very happy, and not a little added to the esteem and respect he had previously entertained for his character.

"The next morning the dean called on Sir Joshua Reynolds with the following verses:—

I lately thought no man alive
Could e'er improve past forty-five,
And ventured to assert it.
The observation was not new,
But seem'd to me so just and true
That none could controvert it.

'No, sir,' says Johnson, ''tis not so;
'Tis your mistake, and I can show
An instance, if you doubt it.
You, who perhaps are forty-eight,
May still improve, 'tis not too late:
I wish you 'd set about it."

[1] [Probably Miss Reynolds herself.—Ed.]

Encouraged thus to mend my faults, Reyn.
I turn'd his counsel in my thoughts Recoll.
Which way I could apply it;
Genius I knew was past my reach,
For who can learn what none can teach?
And wit—I could not buy it.

Then come, my friends, and try your skill;
You may improve me if you will,
(My books are at a distance);
With you I'll live and learn, and then
Instead of books I shall read men,
So lend me your assistance.

Dear knight of Plympton [1], teach me how
To suffer with unclouded brow,
And smile serene as thine,
The jest uncouth and truth severe;
Like thee to turn my deafest ear,
And calmly drink my wine.

Thou say'st not only skill is gain'd,
But genius, too, may be attain'd,
By studious invitation;
Thy temper mild, thy genius fine,
I 'll study till I make them mine
By constant meditation.

Thy art of pleasing teach me, Garrick,
Thou who reversest odes Pindarick [2]
A second time read o'er;
Oh! could we read thee backwards too,
Last thirty years thou should'st review,
And charm us thirty more.

If I have thoughts and can't express 'em,
Gibbon shall teach me how to dress em
In terms select and terse;
Jones teach me modesty and Greek;
Smith, how to think; Burke, how to speak;
And Beauclerk to converse.

Let Johnson teach me how to place
In fairest light each borrow'd grace;
From him I'll learn to write:
Copy his free and easy style,
And from the roughness of his file
Grow, like himself, polite."]

Johnson told me that he was once much pleased to find that a carpenter who lived near him was very ready to show him some things in his business which

[1] [Sir Joshua Reynolds was born at Plympton in Devon.—Ed.]
[2] [A humorous attempt of Garrick's to read one of Cumberland's odes backwards. See *ante*, vol. iii. p. 408.—Ed.]

he wished to see: "It was paying," said he, "respect to literature."

I asked him if he was not dissatisfied with having so small a share of wealth, and none of those distinctions in the state which are the objects of ambition. He had only a pension of three hundred a year. Why was he not in such circumstances as to keep his coach? Why had he not some considerable office? JOHNSON. "Sir, I have never complained of the world; nor do I think that I have reason to complain. It is rather to be wondered at that I have so much. My pension is more out of the usual course of things than any instance that I have known. Here, sir, was a man avowedly no friend to government at the time, who got a pension without asking for it. I never courted the great; they sent for me; but I think they now give me up. They are satisfied: they have seen enough of me." Upon my observing that I could not believe this, for they must certainly be highly pleased by his conversation; conscious of his own superiority, he answered, "No, sir; great lords and great ladies don't love to have their mouths stopped." This was very expressive of the effect which the force of his understanding and brilliancy of his fancy could not but produce; and, to be sure, they must have found themselves strangely diminished in his company. When I warmly declared how happy I was at all times to hear him,—"Yes, sir," said he; "but if you were lord chancellor it would not be so: you would then consider your own dignity."

There was much truth and knowledge of human nature in this remark. But certainly one should think that in whatever elevated state of life a man who *knew* the value of the conversation of Johnson might be placed, though he might prudently avoid a situation in which he might appear lessened by com-

parison, yet he would frequently gratify himself in private with the participation of the rich intellectual entertainment which Johnson could furnish. Strange, however, is it, to consider how few of the great sought his society; so that if one were disposed to take occasion for satire on that account, very conspicuous objects present themselves. His noble friend, Lord Elibank, well observed, that if a great man procured an interview with Johnson, and did not wish to see him more, it showed a mere idle curiosity, and a wretched want of relish for extraordinary powers of mind. Mrs. Thrale justly and wittily accounted for such conduct by saying, that Johnson's conversation was by much too strong for a person accustomed to obsequiousness and flattery; it was *mustard in a young child's mouth!*

. One day, when I told him that I was a zealous tory, but not enough "according to knowledge," and should be obliged to him for "a reason," he was so candid, and expressed himself so well, that I begged of him to repeat what he had said, and I wrote down as follows:

OF TORY AND WHIG.

"A wise tory and a wise whig, I believe, will agree. Their principles are the same, though their modes of thinking are different. A high tory makes government unintelligible; it is lost in the clouds. A violent whig makes it impracticable: he is for allowing so much liberty to every man, that there is not power enough to govern any man. The prejudice of the tory is for establishment, the prejudice of the whig is for innovation. A tory does not wish to give more real power to government; but that government should have more reverence. Then they differ as to the church. The tory is not for giving more legal power to the clergy, but wishes they should

have a considerable influence, founded on the opinion of mankind: the whig is for limiting and watching them with a narrow jealousy."

"TO MR. PERKINS.

"2d June, 1781.

"SIR,—However often I have seen you, I have hitherto forgotten the note; but I have now sent it, with my good wishes for the prosperity of you and your partner [1], of whom, from our short conversation, I could not judge otherwise than favourably. I am, sir, your most humble servant,

"SAM. JOHNSON."

On Saturday, June 2, I set out for Scotland, and had promised to pay a visit, in my way, as I sometimes did, at Southill, in Bedfordshire, at the hospitable mansion of Squire Dilly, the elder brother of my worthy friends, the booksellers, in the Poultry. Dr. Johnson agreed to be of the party this year, with Mr. Charles Dilly and me, and to go and see Lord Bute's seat at Luton Hoe. He talked little to us in the carriage, being chiefly occupied in reading Dr. Watson's [2] second volume of "Chemical Essays," which he liked very well, and his own "Prince of Abyssinia," on which he seemed to be intensely fixed; having told us, that he had not looked at it since it was first finished. I happened to take it out of my pocket this day, and he seized upon it with avidity. He pointed out to me the following remarkable passage: "By what means (said the prince) are the Europeans thus powerful? or why, since they can so easily visit Asia and Africa for trade or conquest,

[1] Mr. Barclay, a descendant of Robert Barclay, of Ury, the celebrated apologist of the people called Quakers, and remarkable for maintaining the principles of his venerable progenitor, with as much of the elegance of modern manners as is consistent with primitive simplicity.—BOSWELL.

[2] Now Bishop of Llandaff, one of the *poorest* bishopricks in this kingdom. His lordship has written with much zeal to show the propriety of *equalizing* the revenues of bishops. He has informed us that he has burnt all his chemical papers. The friends of our excellent constitution, now assailed on every side by innovators and levellers, would have less regretted the suppression of some of his lordship's other writings.—BOSWELL.

cannot the Asiaticks and Africans invade their coasts, plant colonies[1] in their ports, and give laws to their natural princes? The same wind that carried them back would bring us thither." "They are more powerful, sir, than we (answered Imlac), because they are wiser. Knowledge will always predominate over ignorance, as man governs the other animals. But why their knowledge is more than ours, I know not what reason can be given but the unsearchable will of the Supreme Being." He said, "This, sir, no man can explain otherwise."

We stopped at Welwin, where I wished much to see, in company with Johnson, the residence of the authour of "Night Thoughts," which was then possessed by his son, Mr. Young. Here some address was requisite, for I was not acquainted with Mr. Young, and had I proposed to Dr. Johnson that we should send to him, he would have checked my wish, and perhaps been offended. I therefore concerted with Mr. Dilly, that I should steal away from Dr. Johnson and him, and try what reception I could procure from Mr. Young: if unfavourable, nothing was to be said; but if agreeable, I should return and notify it to them. I hastened to Mr. Young's, found he was at home, sent in word that a gentleman desired to wait upon him, and was shown into a parlour, where he and a young lady, his daughter, were sitting. He appeared to be a plain, civil, country gentleman; and when I begged pardon for presuming to trouble him, but that I wished much to see his place, if he would give me leave, he behaved very courteously, and answered, "By all means, sir. We are just going to drink tea; will you sit down?" I thanked him, but said that Dr. Johnson had come with me from

[1] The Phœnicians and Carthaginians *did* plant colonies in Europe.—KEARNEY.

London, and I must return to the inn to drink tea with him: that my name was Boswell; I had travelled with him in the Hebrides. "Sir," said he, "I should think it a great honour to see Dr. Johnson here. Will you allow me to send for him?" Availing myself of this opening, I said that "I would go myself and bring him when he had drunk tea; he knew nothing of my calling here." Having been thus successful, I hastened back to the inn, and informed Dr. Johnson that "Mr. Young, son of Dr. Young, the authour of 'Night Thoughts,' whom I had just left, desired to have the honour of seeing him at the house where his father lived." Dr. Johnson luckily made no inquiry how this invitation had arisen, but agreed to go; and when we entered Mr. Young's parlour, he addressed him with a very polite bow, "Sir, I had a curiosity to come and see this place. I had the honour to know that great man your father." We went into the garden, where we found a gravel walk, on each side of which was a row of trees, planted by Dr. Young, which formed a handsome Gothick arch. Dr. Johnson called it a fine grove. I beheld it with reverence.

We sat some time in the summer-house, on the outside wall of which was inscribed, "*Ambulantes in horto audiebant vocem Dei*[1];" and in the reference to a brook by which it is situated, "*Vivendi rectè qui prorogat horam*[2]," &c. I said to Mr. Young, that I had been told his father was cheerful. "Sir," said he, "he was too well bred a man not to be cheerful

[1] ["Walking in the garden they heard the voice of God." *Genesis*, iii. 8. —ED.]

[2] ["——— The man who has it in his power
To practise virtue, and protracts the hour,
Waits till the river pass away: but, lo!
Ceaseless it flows and will for ever flow."
Francis. Horace Epist. lib. i. ep. 2, v. 41.—ED.]

in company; but he was gloomy when alone. He never was cheerful after my mother's death, and he had met with many disappointments." Dr. Johnson observed to me afterwards, "That this was no favourable account of Dr. Young; for it is not becoming in a man to have so little acquiescence in the ways of Providence, as to be gloomy because he has not obtained as much preferment as he expected; nor to continue gloomy for the loss of his wife. Grief has its time." The last part of this censure was theoretically made. Practically, we know that grief for the loss of a wife may be continued very long, in proportion as affection has been sincere. No man knew this better than Dr. Johnson.

We went into the church, and looked at the monument erected by Mr. Young to his father. Mr. Young mentioned an anecdote, that his father had received several thousand pounds of subscription-money for his "Universal Passion," but had lost it in the South Sea [1]. Dr. Johnson thought this must be a mistake, for he had never seen a subscription-book.

Upon the road we talked of the uncertainty of profit with which authours and booksellers engage in the publication of literary works. JOHNSON. "My judgment I have found is no certain rule as to the sale of a book." BOSWELL. "Pray, sir, have you been much plagued with authours sending you their works to revise?" JOHNSON. "No, sir; I have been thought a sour surly fellow." BOSWELL. "Very lucky for you, sir,—in that respect." I must however observe, that, notwithstanding what he now said, which he no doubt imagined at the time to be the fact, there was, perhaps, no man who more frequently

[1] This assertion is disproved by a comparison of dates. The first four satires of Young were published in 1725. The South Sea scheme (which appears to be meant) was in 1720.—MALONE.

yielded to the solicitations even of very obscure authours to read their manuscripts, or more liberally assisted them with advice and correction.

He found himself very happy at Squire Dilly's, where there is always abundance of excellent fare, and hearty welcome.

On Sunday, June 3, we all went to Southill church, which is very near to Mr. Dilly's house. It being the first Sunday in the month, the holy sacrament was administered, and I staid to partake of it. When I came afterwards into Dr. Johnson's room, he said, "You did right to stay and receive the communion: I had not thought of it." This seemed to imply that he did not choose to approach the altar without a previous preparation, as to which good men entertain different opinions, some holding that it is irreverent to partake of that ordinance without considerable premeditation; others, that whoever is a sincere Christian, and in a proper frame of mind to discharge any other ritual duty of our religion, may, without scruple, discharge this most solemn one. A middle notion I believe to be the just one, which is, that communicants need not think a long train of preparatory forms indispensably necessary; but neither should they rashly and lightly venture upon so awful and mysterious an institution. Christians must judge, each for himself, what degree of retirement and self-examination is necessary upon each occasion.

Being in a frame of mind which I hope, for the felicity of human nature, many experience,—in fine weather,—at the country-house of a friend,—consoled and elevated by pious exercises,—I expressed myself with an unrestrained fervour to my "Guide, Philosopher, and Friend." "My dear sir, I would fain be a good man; and I am very good now. I fear God, and honour the king; I wish to do no ill, and to be benevolent to all mankind." He looked at me

with a benignant indulgence; but took occasion to give me wise and salutary caution. "Do not, sir, accustom yourself to trust to *impressions*. There is a middle state of mind between conviction and hypocrisy, of which many are unconscious. By trusting to impressions, a man may gradually come to yield to them, and at length be subject to them, so as not to be a free agent, or what is the same thing in effect, to *suppose* that he is not a free agent. A man who is in that state should not be suffered to live; if he declares he cannot help acting in a particular way, and is irresistibly impelled, there can be no confidence in him, no more than in a tiger. But, sir, no man believes himself to be impelled irresistibly; we know that he who says he believes it, lies. Favourable impressions at particular moments, as to the state of our souls, may be deceitful and dangerous. In general no man can be sure of his acceptance with God; some, indeed, may have had it revealed to them. St. Paul, who wrought miracles, may have had a miracle wrought on himself, and may have obtained supernatural assurance of pardon, and mercy, and beatitude; yet St. Paul, though he expresses strong hope, also expresses fear, lest having preached to others, he himself should be a castaway."

The opinion of a learned bishop of our acquaintance, as to there being merit in religious faith, being mentioned:—JOHNSON. "Why, yes, sir, the most licentious man, were hell open before him, would not take the most beautiful strumpet to his arms. We must, as the apostle says, live by faith, not by sight [1]."

[1] [There seems much obscurity here. If the bishop used the word *merit* in a popular sense, and meant only to say, colloquially, that "a religious faith was *meritorious* or *praiseworthy*," the observation was hardly worth recording; yet, it is not, on the other hand, likely that he meant, speaking theologically, to attribute *merit towards salvation* to any act or operation of the human mind, "for that were" (as the Homily forbids) "to count ourselves to be justified by some act or virtue which is within us." But on either interpretation it seems

I talked to him of original sin [1], in consequence of the fall of man, and of the atonement made by our Saviour. After some conversation, which he desired me to remember, he, at my request, dictated to me as follows:

"With respect to original sin, the inquiry is not necessary; for whatever is the cause of human corruption, men are evidently and confessedly so corrupt, that all the laws of heaven and earth are insufficient to restrain them from crimes.

"Whatever difficulty there may be in the conception of vicarious punishments, it is an opinion which has had possession of mankind in all ages. There is no nation that has not used the practice of sacrifices. Whoever, therefore, denies the propriety of vicarious punishments, holds an opinion which the sentiments and practice of mankind have contradicted from the beginning of the world. The great sacrifice for the sins of mankind was offered at the death of the Messiah, who is called in Scripture 'The Lamb of God, that taketh away the sins of the world.' To judge of the reasonableness of the scheme of redemption it must be considered as necessary to the government of the universe that God should make known his perpetual and irreconcileable detestation of moral evil. He might indeed punish, and punish

hard to discover the connexion or meaning of the reply attributed to Dr. Johnson. The bishop's opinion is evidently very imperfectly stated, and there must have been some connecting links in the chain of Johnson's reasoning which Mr. Boswell has lost. The passage—not quite accurately quoted by Dr. Johnson—is in St. Paul's second epistle to the Corinthians, v. 7. "We *walk* by faith, and not by sight."—Ed.]

[1] Dr. Ogden, in his second sermon "On the Articles of the Christian Faith," with admirable acuteness thus addresses the opposers of that doctrine, which accounts for the confusion, sin, and misery, which we find in this life: "It would be severe in God, you think, to *degrade* us to such a sad state as this, for the offence of our first parents: but you can allow him to *place* us in it without any inducement. Are our calamities lessened for not being ascribed to Adam? If your condition be unhappy, is it not still unhappy, whatever was the occasion? with the aggravation of this reflection, that if it was as good as it was at first designed, there seems to be somewhat the less reason to look for its amendment."—Boswell.

only the offenders; but as the end of punishment is not revenge of crimes but propagation of virtue, it was more becoming the divine clemency to find another manner of proceeding, less destructive to man, and at least equally powerful to promote goodness. The end of punishment is to reclaim and warn. *That* punishment will both reclaim and warn, which shows evidently such abhorrence of sin in God, as may deter us from it, or strike us with dread of vengeance when we have committed it. This is effected by vicarious punishment. Nothing could more testify the opposition between the nature of God and moral evil, or more amply display his justice, to men and angels, to all orders and successions of beings, than that it was necessary for the highest and purest nature, even for Divinity itself, to pacify the demands of vengeance by a painful death; of which the natural effect will be, that when justice is appeased, there is a proper place for the exercise of mercy; and that such propitiation shall supply, in some degree, the imperfections of our obedience and the inefficacy of our repentance: for obedience and repentance, such as we can perform, are still necessary. Our Saviour has told us, that he did not come to destroy the law but to fulfil: to fulfil the typical law, by the performance of what those types had foreshown, and the moral law, by precepts of greater purity and higher exultation."

Here he said "God bless you with it." I acknowledged myself much obliged to him; but I begged that he would go on as to the propitiation being the chief object of our most holy faith. He then dictated this one other paragraph.

"The peculiar doctrine of christianity is, that of an universal sacrifice and perpetual propitiation[1].

[1] [See *ante*, vol. iv. p. 41, *n.* This passage proves the justice of the observation which the Editor made in that note as to Johnson's opinion on this important point.—ED.]

Other prophets only proclaimed the will and the threatenings of God. Christ satisfied his justice."

The Reverend Mr. Palmer[1], fellow of Queen's College, Cambridge, dined with us. He expressed a wish that a better provision were made for parish-clerks. JOHNSON. "Yes, sir, a parish-clerk should be a man who is able to make a will or write a letter for any body in the parish."

I mentioned Lord Monboddo's notion[2] that the ancient Egyptians, with all their learning and all their arts, were not only black, but woolly-haired. Mr. Palmer asked how did it appear upon examining the mummies? Dr. Johnson approved of this test.

Although upon most occasions I never heard a more strenuous advocate for the advantages of wealth than Dr. Johnson, he this day, I know not from what caprice, took the other side. "I have not observed," said he, "that men of very large fortunes enjoy any thing extraordinary that makes happiness. What has the Duke of Bedford? What has the Duke of Devonshire? The only great instance that I have ever known of the enjoyment of wealth was that of Jamaica Dawkins, who going to visit Palmyra, and hearing that the way was infested by

[1] This unfortunate person, whose full name was Thomas Fyshe Palmer, afterwards went to Dundee, in Scotland, where he officiated as minister to a congregation of the sect who call themselves Unitarians, from a notion that they distinctively worship one God, because they *deny* the mysterious doctrine of the Trinity. They do not advert that the great body of the christian church in maintaining that mystery maintain also the *unity* of the Godhead: "the Trinity in Unity!—three persons and one God." The church humbly adores the Divinity as exhibited in the holy Scriptures. The unitarian sect vainly presumes to comprehend and define the Almighty. Mr. Palmer having heated his mind with political speculations, became so much dissatisfied with our excellent constitution as to compose, publish, and circulate writings, which were found to be so seditious and dangerous, that upon being found guilty by a jury, the court of justiciary in Scotland sentenced him to transportation for fourteen years. A loud clamour against this sentence was made by some members of both houses of parliament; but both houses approved of it by a great majority, and he was conveyed to the settlement for convicts in New South Wales.—BOSWELL. Mr. T. F. Palmer was of Queen's College in Cambridge, where he took the degree of master of arts in 1772, and that of S. T. B. in 1781. He died on his return from Botany Bay in the year 1803.—MALONE.

[2] Taken from Herodotus.—BOSWELL.

robbers, hired a troop of Turkish horse to guard him [1]."

Dr. Gibbons [2], the dissenting minister, being mentioned, he said, "I took to Dr. Gibbons." And addressing himself to Mr. Charles Dilly, added, "I shall be glad to see him. Tell him, if he 'll call on me, and dawdle over a dish of tea in an afternoon, I shall take it kind."

The Reverend Mr. Smith, vicar of Southill, a very respectable man, with a very agreeable family, sent an invitation to us to drink tea. I remarked Dr. Johnson's very respectful politeness. Though always fond of changing the scene, he said, "We must have Mr. Dilly's leave. We cannot go from your house, sir, without your permission." We all went, and were well satisfied with our visit. I, however, remember nothing particular, except a nice distinction which Dr. Johnson made with respect to the power of memory, maintaining that forgetfulness was a man's own fault. "To remember and to recollect," said he, "are different things. A man has not the power to recollect what is not in his mind, but when a thing is in his mind he may remember it [3]."

The remark was occasioned by my leaning back on a chair, which a little before I had perceived to

[1] Henry Dawkins, esq., the companion of Wood and Bouverie in their travels, and the patron of the *Athenian* Stuart.—ED.]

[2] [Thomas Gibbons, "a Calvinist" (says the *Biog. Dict.*) "of the old stamp, and a man of great piety and primitive manners." He wrote a life of Dr. Watts, and assisted Dr. Johnson with some materials for the *Life* of Watts in the *English Poets*. He died by a stroke of apoplexy in 1785, ætat. sixty-five.—ED.]

[3] [Mr. Boswell's note must have been imperfect. Dr. Johnson certainly never talked such nonsense as is here attributed to him—a man can no more *remember* "what is *not* on his mind" than he can *recollect* it, and "when a thing *is* in his mind" he can just as well *recollect* as remember it. In his Dictionary, Johnson defines "*remember*, to bear in mind, to recollect, *to call to mind*." This would seem to imply that he considered the words as nearly synonymous; but in his definition of "*recollect*, to recover memory, to gather what is scattered," he makes the true distinction. When the words are to be contradistinguished, it may be said that *remembrance* is *spontaneous*, and *recollection* an *effort*.—ED.]

be broken, and pleading forgetfulness as an excuse. "Sir," said he, "its being broken was certainly in your mind."

When I observed that a housebreaker was in general very timorous: JOHNSON. "No wonder, sir; he is afraid of being shot getting *into* a house, or hanged when he has got *out* of it."

He told us, that he had in one day written six sheets of a translation from the French; adding, "I should be glad to see it now. I wish that I had copies of all the pamphlets written against me, as it is said Pope had. Had I known that I should make so much noise in the world, I should have been at pains to collect them. I believe there is hardly a day in which there is not something about me in the newspapers."

On Monday, June 4, we all went to Luton-Hoe, to see Lord Bute's magnificent seat, for which I had obtained a ticket. As we entered the park, I talked in a high style of my old friendship with Lord Mountstuart, and said, "I shall probably be much at this place." The sage, aware of human vicissitudes, gently checked me: "Don't you be too sure of that[1]." He made two or three peculiar observations; as, when shown the botanical garden, "Is not *every* garden a botanical garden?" When told that there was a shrubbery to the extent of several miles; "That is making a very foolish use of the ground; a little of it is very well." When it was proposed that we should walk on the pleasure-ground; "Don't let us fatigue ourselves. Why should we walk there? Here's a fine tree, let's get to the top of it." But upon the whole, he was very much pleased. He

[1] [See *ante*, vol. iii. p. 317.

"Dulcis inexpertis potentis cultura amici,
Expertus metuit."—*Hor. Ep.* xviii. lib. i. v. 86.—ED.]

said, "This is one of the places I do not regret having come to see. . . It is a very stately place, indeed; in the house magnificence is not sacrificed to convenience, nor convenience to magnificence. The library is very splendid; the dignity of the rooms is very great; and the quantity of pictures is beyond expectation, beyond hope."

It happened without any previous concert that we visited the seat of Lord Bute upon the king's birthday; we dined and drank his majesty's health at an inn in the village of Luton.

In the evening I put him in mind of his promise, to favour me with a copy of his celebrated Letter to the Earl of Chesterfield, and he was at last pleased to comply with this earnest request, by dictating it to me from his memory; for he believed that he himself had no copy. There was an animated glow in his countenance while he thus recalled his high-minded indignation.

He laughed heartily at a ludicrous action in the court of session, in which I was counsel. The society of procurators, or attornies, entitled to practise in the inferior courts at Edinburgh, had obtained a royal charter, in which they had taken care to have their ancient designation of *Procurators* changed into that of *Solicitors*, from a notion, as they supposed, that it was more *genteel;* and this new title they displayed by a public advertisement for a general meeting at their hall.

It has been said that the Scottish nation is not distinguished for humour; and, indeed, what happened on this occasion may, in some degree, justify the remark; for although this society had contrived to make themselves a very prominent object for the ridicule of such as might stoop to it, the only joke to

which it gave rise was the following paragraph, sent to the newspaper called "The Caledonian Mercury."

"A correspondent informs us, the Worshipful Society of *Chaldeans, Cadies,* or *Running-Stationers* of this city are resolved, in imitation, and encouraged by the singular success of their brethren, of an *equally respectable* Society, to apply for a Charter of their Privileges, particularly of the sole privilege of PROCURING, in the most extensive sense of the word, exclusive of chairmen, porters, penny-post men, and other *inferior* ranks; their brethren, the R—Y—L S—L——RS, *alias* P—C——RS, *before the* INFERIOUR Courts of this City, always excepted.

"Should the Worshipful Society be successful, they are farther resolved not to be *puffed up* thereby, but to demean themselves with more equanimity and decency than their *r-y-l, learned,* and *very modest* brethren above mentioned have done, upon their late dignification and exaltation."

A majority of the members of the society prosecuted Mr. Robertson, the publisher of the paper, for damages; and the first judgment of the whole court very wisely dismissed the action: *Solventur risu tabulæ, tu missus abibis.* But a new trial or review was granted upon a petition, according to the forms in Scotland. This petition I was engaged to answer, and Dr. Johnson, with great alacrity, furnished me this evening with [an argument, which will be found in the Appendix.]

I am ashamed to mention, that the court, by a plurality of voices, without having a single additional circumstance before them, reversed their own judgment, made a serious matter of this dull and foolish joke, and adjudged Mr. Robertson to pay to the society five pounds (sterling money) and costs of suit. The decision will seem strange to English lawyers.

On Tuesday, June 5, Johnson was to return to London. He was very pleasant at breakfast; I mentioned a friend of mine having resolved never

to marry a pretty woman. JOHNSON. "Sir, it is a very foolish resolution to resolve not to marry a pretty woman. Beauty is of itself very estimable. No, sir, I would prefer a pretty woman, unless there are objections to her. A pretty woman may be foolish; a pretty woman may be wicked; a pretty woman may not like me. But there is no such danger in marrying a pretty woman as is apprehended; she will not be persecuted if she does not invite persecution. A pretty woman, if she has a mind to be wicked, can find a readier way than another; and that is all."

I accompanied him in Mr. Dilly's chaise to Shefford, where, talking of Lord Bute's never going to Scotland, he said, "As an Englishman, I should wish all the Scotch gentlemen should be educated in England; Scotland would become a province; they would spend all their rents in England." This is a subject of much consequence, and much delicacy. The advantage of an English education is unquestionably very great to Scotch gentlemen of talents and ambition; and regular visits to Scotland, and perhaps other means, might be effectually used to prevent them from being totally estranged from their native country, any more than a Cumberland or Northumberland gentleman, who has been educated in the south of England. I own, indeed, that it is no small misfortune for Scotch gentlemen, who have neither talents nor ambition, to be educated in England; where they may be perhaps distinguished only by a nickname, lavish their fortune in giving expensive entertainments to those who laugh at them, and saunter about as mere idle, insignificant hangers-on even upon the foolish great; when, if they had been judiciously brought up at home, they might have been comfortable and creditable members of society.

At Shefford I had another affectionate parting from my revered friend, who was taken up by the Bedford coach and carried to the metropolis. I went with Messieurs Dilly to see some friends at Bedford; dined with the officers of the militia of the county, and next day proceeded on my journey.

APPENDIX.

No. I.

[ARGUMENT in favour of a negro claiming his liberty, *referred to in p. 54.*]

"IT must be agreed that in most ages many countries have had part of their inhabitants in a state of slavery; yet it may be doubted whether slavery can ever be supposed the natural condition of man. It is impossible not to conceive that men in their original state were equal; and very difficult to imagine how one would be subjected to another but by violent compulsion. An individual may, indeed, forfeit his liberty by a crime; but he cannot by that crime forfeit the liberty of his children. What is true of a criminal seems true likewise of a captive. A man may accept life from a conquering enemy on condition of perpetual servitude; but it is very doubtful whether he can entail that servitude on his descendants; for no man can stipulate without commission for another. The condition which he himself accepts, his son or grandson would have rejected. If we should admit, what perhaps may with more reason be denied, that there are certain relations between man and man which may make slavery necessary and just, yet it can never be proved that he who is now suing for his freedom ever stood in any of those relations. He is certainly subject by no law, but that of violence, to his present master; who pretends no claim to his obedience, but that he bought him from a merchant of slaves, whose right to sell him never was examined. It is said, that according to the constitutions of Jamaica he was legally enslaved; these constitutions are merely positive; and apparently injurious to the rights of mankind, because whoever is exposed to sale is condemned to slavery without appeal; by whatever fraud or violence he might have been originally brought into the merchant's power. In our own time princes have been sold, by wretches to whose care they were intrusted, that they might have an European education; but when once they were brought to a market

in the plantations, little would avail either their dignity or their wrongs. The laws of Jamaica afford a negro no redress. His colour is considered as a sufficient testimony against him. It is to be lamented that moral right should ever give way to political convenience. But if temptations of interest are sometimes too strong for human virtue, let us at least retain a virtue where there is no temptation to quit it. In the present case there is apparent right on one side, and no convenience on the other. Inhabitants of this island can neither gain riches nor power by taking away the liberty of any part of the human species. The sum of the argument is this:—No man is by nature the property of another. The defendant is, therefore, by nature free. The rights of nature must be some way forfeited before they can be justly taken away. That the defendant has, by any act, forfeited the rights of nature, we require to be proved; and if no proof of such forfeiture can be given, we doubt not but the justice of the court will declare him free."

No. II.

ANECDOTES OF DR. JOHNSON.

FROM MR. CRADOCK'S MEMOIRS.

(*From the Gentleman's Magazine*, vol. xcviii. p. 21, &c.)

[*Referred to in p.* 135.]

THE *editor was induced, by the authority of Mr. Nichols, to admit a few extracts from Mr. Cradock's* Memoirs *into the text,* ante, vol. iii. p. 320, and vol. iv. p. 135, *but on reconsideration he has thought it better to reserve the bulk of that gentleman's anecdotes for the Appendix; and, indeed, it may be doubted whether they will be thought deserving of a place even here, for they are certainly very loose and inaccurate; but as they have been republished in the* Gentleman's Magazine *(for January, 1828) with some* corrections and additions from the author's MS., *the editor thinks it right to notice them, and as they profess to be there enlarged from the MS., he copies this latter version, which differs in some points from the* Memoirs.

"The first opportunity that I had of being introduced to the great luminary was by Dr. Percy, in Bolt-court[1]. He was on the

[1] [Here is a double or triple mistake. Mr. Cradock says in another part of his Memoirs that he was made known to Dr. Johnson by Lord Stowell, when he was a tutor in University College, Oxford. Now, Johnson did not remove to Bolt-court till 1777, and it is certain that Mr. Cradock dined with him at Davies's on the 12th April, 1776. —Ed.]

floor, in a smoky chamber, rather an uncouth figure, surrounded with books. He meant to be civil in his way, showed us a Runic bible, and made many remarks upon it; but I felt awed and uncomfortable in his presence. Dr. Percy mentioned to him that some friend of his had been disappointed in a journey he had taken on business, to see some person near town; Johnson hastily replied, 'Sir, mankind miscalculate in almost all the concerns of life; by your account he set out too late, got wet through, lost the opportunity of transacting his business; but then, I suppose, he got the horse the cheaper.'

"Mr. Nichols, in his entertaining 'Literary Anecdotes,' has justly remarked, that Johnson was not always that surly companion he was supposed to be, and gives as an instance rather an impertinent joke of mine about Alexander and his two queens, and Johnson's good-humoured reply, 'that in *his* family it had never been ascertained which was Roxana and which was Statira[1];' but I then had got experience, and pretty well knew when I might safely venture into the lion's mouth.

"The first time I dined in company with him was at T. Davies's, Russell-street, Covent-garden, as mentioned by Mr. Boswell, in the second volume of the 'Life of Johnson.' On mentioning my engagement previously to a friend, he said, 'Do you wish to be well with Johnson?' 'To be sure, sir,' I replied, 'or I should not have taken any pains to have been introduced into his company.' 'Why then, sir,' says he, 'let me offer you some advice: you must not leave him soon after dinner to go to the play; during dinner he will be rather silent (it is a very serious business with him); between six and seven he will look about him, and see who remains, and, if he then at all likes the party, he will be very civil and communicative.' He exactly fulfilled what my friend had prophesied. Mrs. Davies did the honours of the table: she was a favourite with Johnson, who sat betwixt her and Dr. Harwood, the writer of the 'Harmony of the Gospels[2];' I sat next, below, to Mr. Boswell opposite. Nobody could bring Johnson forward more civilly or properly than Davies. The subject of conversation turned upon the tragedy of 'Œdipus[3].' This was particularly interesting to me, as I was then employed in endeavouring to make such alterations in Dryden's play as to make it suitable to a revival at Drury-lane theatre. Johnson did not seem to think favourably of it; but I ventured to plead that Sophocles wrote it expressly for the theatre, at the public cost, and that it was one of

[1] [Mrs. Williams and Mrs. Desmoulins.—Ed.]

[2] [The editor never before heard, and does not believe, that Dr. Harwood wrote a "Harmony of the Gospels."—Ed.]

[3] [Boswell says it turned on Aristotle's opinion of the Greek tragedy in general; which may, however, have led to the subject of Œdipus, though he does not notice it. —Ed.]

the most celebrated dramas of all antiquity,' Johnson said, 'Œdipus was a poor miserable man, subjected to the greatest distress, without any degree of culpability of his own.' I urged that Aristotle, as well as most of the Greek poets, were partial to this character; that Addison considered that as terror and pity were particularly excited, he was the properest——here Johnson suddenly becoming loud I paused, and rather apologized that it might not become me, perhaps, too strongly to contradict Dr. Johnson. 'Nay, sir,' replied he, hastily, 'if I had not wished to have heard your arguments, I should not have disputed with you at all.' All went on quite pleasantly afterwards. We sat late[1], and something being mentioned about my going to Bath, when taking leave, Johnson very graciously said, 'I should have a pleasure in meeting you there.' Either Boswell or Davies immediately whispered to me, '*You're landed.*'

"The next time I had the pleasure of meeting him was at the Literary Club[2] dinner at the coffee-house in St. James's-street, to which I was introduced by my partial friend, Dr. Percy. Johnson that day was not in very good humour. We rather waited for dinner. Garrick came late, and apologized that he had been to the house of lords, and Lord Camden insisted on conveying him in his carriage: Johnson said nothing, but he looked a volume. The party was numerous. I sat next Mr. Burke at dinner. There was a beef-steak pie placed just before us; and I remarked to Mr. Burke that something smelt very disagreeable, and looked to see if there was not a dog under the table. Burke, with great good humour, said, 'I believe, sir, I can tell you what is the cause; it is some of *my country butter* in the crust that smells so disagreeably.' Dr. Johnson just at that time, sitting opposite, desired one of us to send him some of the beef-steak pie. We sent but little, which he soon despatched, and then returned his plate for more. Johnson particularly disliked that any notice should be taken of what he eat, but Burke ventured to say he was glad to find that Dr. Johnson was any ways able to relish the beef-steak pie. Johnson, not perceiving what he alluded to, hastily exclaimed, 'Sir, there is a time of life when a man requires the repairs of the table!' The company rather talked for victory than social intercourse. I think it was in consequence of what passed that

[1] [This seems to be also an error, for Boswell says they adjourned to the Crown and Anchor, to sup with Sir Joshua Reynolds and Mr. Langton.—Ed.]

[2] [Here seems to be another double mistake. No stranger is ever invited to *the club*. It met at the Turk's Head, Gerrard-street, up to 1783, and did not remove to St. James's-street till 1792, eight years after John on's death. Goldsmith died in 1774, twenty years before the club migrated in St. James's-street. It is probable that Mr. Cradock mistook an occasional meeting at the St. James's coffeehouse (such a one did really produce "*Retaliation*") for a meeting of *the Club*. Mr. Colman, in his Random Records, makes the same mistake, and wonders at finding noticed in "*Retaliation*" persons who did not belong to the club.—Ed.]

evening that Dr. Goldsmith wrote his '*Retaliation.*' Mr. Richard Burke[1] was present, talked most, and seemed to be the most free and easy of any of the company. I had never met him before. Burke seemed desirous of bringing his relative forward. In Mr. Chalmers's account of Goldsmith, different sorts of liquor are offered as appropriate to each guest. To the two Burkes ale from Wicklow, and wine from Ferney to me: my name is in italics, as supposing I am a wine-bibber; but the author's allusion to the wines of Ferney was meant for me, I rather think, from having taken a plan of a tragedy from Voltaire.

"I owed many obligations to Dr. Percy. He had a pleasure in taking me with him to call upon Johnson, and in giving me invitations to the chaplains' table whenever he was in waiting at St. James's; and I now regret, for the sake of others, the change that has since been made in altering or giving up that very pleasant association. Percy, on account of the original publication of his 'Ancient Ballads,' and his consequent introduction into Northumberland-House, was much indebted both to Johnson and Farmer. He was not always the great Dr. Percy I was still much acquainted with; he was then in good fellowship with both. Mrs. Percy, afterwards nurse to the Duke of Kent, at Buckingham-House, told me that Johnson once stayed near a month with them at their dull Parsonage at Easton Mauduit; that Dr. Percy looked out all sorts of books to be ready for his amusement after breakfast, and that Johnson was so attentive and polite to her, that, when Dr. Percy mentioned the literature proposed in the study, he said, 'No, sir, I shall first wait upon Mrs. Percy to feed the ducks.' But those halcyon days were about to change,—not as to Mrs. Percy, for to the last she remained a favourite with him. Percy was much advanced in dignity, and Johnson had given him a lasting offence by parodying the stanzas of the Hermit of Warkworth. [*Ante*, p. 136.]

"Admiral Walsingham, who sometimes resided at Windsor, and sometimes in Portugal-street, frequently boasted that he was the only man to bring together miscellaneous parties, and make them all agreeable; and, indeed, there never before was so strange an assortment as I have occasionally met there. At one of his dinners, were the Duke of Cumberland[2], Dr. Johnson, Mr. Nairn, the optician, and Mr. Leoni, the singer: at another, Dr. Johnson, &c. and a young dashing officer, who determined, he whispered, to attack the old bear

[1] [Mr. Richard Burke, collector, of Granada, the brother, not the son of Mr. Burke. —Ed.]

[2] [It is possible Dr. Johnson may have been acquainted with the Hon. Robert Boyle, who took the name of Walsingham; and *he* may be the *Boyle* mentioned *ante*, vol. i. p. 227. *n.*; but it is hardly possible that Dr. Johnson should have met the Duke of Cumberland at dinner without Mr. Boswell's having mentioned it.—Ed.]

that we seemed all to stand in awe of: there was a good dinner, and during that important time Johnson was deaf to all impertinence. However, after the wine had passed rather freely, the young gentleman was resolved to bait him, and venture out a little further: 'now, Dr. Johnson, do not look so glum, but be a little gay and lively, like others. What would you give, old gentleman, to be as young and sprightly as I am?' 'Why, sir,' said he, 'I think I would almost be content to be as foolish.'

"Johnson (it is well known) professed to recruit his acquaintance with younger persons, and, in his latter days, I, with a few others, was more frequently honoured by his notice. At times he was very gloomy, and would exclaim, 'stay with me, for it is a comfort to me'—a comfort that any feeling mind would wish to administer to a man so kind, though at times so boisterous, when he seized your hand, and repeated, 'Ay, sir, but to die and go we know not where,' &c.—here his morbid melancholy prevailed, and Garrick never spoke so impressively to the heart. Yet, to see him in the evening (though he took nothing stronger than lemonade), a stranger would have concluded that our morning account was a fabrication. No hour was too late to keep him from the tyranny of his own gloomy thoughts.

"A gentleman venturing to say to Johnson, 'Sir, I wonder sometimes that you condescend so far as to attend a city club.' 'Sir, the great chair of a full and pleasant club is, perhaps, the throne of human felicity.'

"I had not the honour to be at all intimate with Johnson till about the time he began to publish his 'Lives of the Poets,' and how he got through that arduous labour is, in some measure, still a mystery to me: he must have been greatly assisted by booksellers[1]. I had some time before lent him Euripides with Milton's manuscript notes: this, though he did not minutely examine (see Joddrel's Euripides), yet he very handsomely returned it[2], and mentioned it in his 'Life of Milton.'

"In the course of conversation one day I dropped out to him that Lord Harborough[3] (then the Rev.) was in possession of a very valuable collection of manuscript poems, and that amongst them there were two or three in the hand-writing of King James I.; that they were bound up handsomely in folio, and were entitled 'Sackville's Poems.' These he solicited me to borrow for him, and Lord Harborough very kindly intrusted them to me for his perusal. At that time he had become careless about his books, and frequently

[1] [The original MS. is still extant, and it appears that he had very little assistance, and none at all from the booksellers.—ED.]

[2] ["His Euripides is, by Mr. Cradock's kindness, now in my hands: the margin is sometimes noted, but I have found nothing remarkable."—*Life of Milton.*—ED.]

[3] [Rev. Robert Sherrard, who became on the death of his elder brother, in 1770, fourth Earl of Harborough.—ED.]

very melancholy. Not finding any acknowledgment about them, I wrote to him, and received the annexed note, 'that he knew nothing about them.'

"'20th January, 1783.

"'Mr. Johnson is very glad of any intelligence, and much obliged by Mr. Cradock's favour and attention. The book he has now sent shall be taken care of; but of a former book mentioned in the note, Mr. Johnson has no remembrance, and can hardly think he ever received it, though bad health may possibly have made him negligent.

"'To Mr. Cradock.'

"This gave me no small concern, and I mentioned it to Steevens, who immediately said, 'You ought not to have lent it to him: he knows nothing about it! I saw the book you describe lie under his old inkstand, and could not think what it was: it is there now.' However, I never regained it till after his death, when reading the melancholy account at Marseilles I became alarmed about the book, and instantly wrote to Sir Joshua Reynolds, who found it directly in the place mentioned by Mr. Steevens, and it was safely returned to Lord Harborough, with due excuses and acknowledgments. I was not equally fortunate in regard to some other papers I had procured for the doctor in regard to Gray and others, and particularly the French translation of the 'Merchant of Venice.' Something had been said before him about a note of Mason's, relative to the mistake of a translator, and the explanation of the word bowling-green, when I entertained him with a more laughable instance of a mistake in regard to the passage of the return of 'my ship Andrew (*mon-Andrew*),' in the 'Merchant of Venice' (act i. sc. 1). 'This,' says the translator, 'is in England a very merry fellow, who plays tricks at a celebrated annual fair held there, and frequently, by his buffooneries, brings home to his employers very extensive gains.' This book, merely owing to his infirmities, likewise, I never received again.

Sometimes trifles diverted him, and relieved his melancholy, but there could be no possible guess how an anecdote would be received. Speaking of Sterne's Sermons—'Sir, the fellow mixes the light with the serious[1]; else in some parts, Dr. Johnson, I was surprised to find you had attended to them at all.' 'Sir, I was in a stage-coach; I should not have read them had I been at large[2].' And directly

[1] [This is made nonsense by the omission of some words. It is correctly given (*ante*, vol. ii. p. 210.) from the *Memoirs*; but the editor of the *Gentleman's Magazine* has *here* made Mr. Cradock a party in a conversation, which in the Memoirs he himself professes to have had at second hand only.—ED.]

[2] [Here again there is a variation from, if not a falsification of, the *Memoirs*. Mr. Cradock *there* says that it was *Sterne* himself that he amused with this story; nor does he pretend that *he* was the person who lent the book, but relates it as an anecdote told him by a friend. So that *Dr. Johnson* and the *rhinocerous laugh* seem to be mere interpolations. In short, these anecdotes, even after the revision, are very poor authority indeed.—ED.]

afterwards, Harris's Hermes was mentioned. 'I think the book is too abstruse; it is heavy.' 'It is; but a work of that kind must be heavy.' 'A rather dull man of my acquaintance asked me,' said I, 'to lend him some book to entertain him, and I offered him Harris's Hermes, and as I expected, from the title, he took it for a novel; when he returned it, I asked him how he liked it, and what he thought of it? "Why, to speak the truth," says he, "I was not much diverted; I think all these imitations of Tristram Shandy fall far short of the original!"' This had its effect, and almost produced from Johnson a rhinocerous laugh.

"One of Dr. Johnson's rudest speeches was to a pompous gentleman coming out of Lichfield cathedral, who said, 'Dr. Johnson, we have had a most excellent discourse to-day!' 'That may be,' said Johnson; 'but it is impossible that you should know it.'

"Of his kindness to me during the last years of his most valuable life, I could enumerate many instances. One slight circumstance, if any were wanting, would give an excellent proof of the goodness of his heart, and that to a person whom he found in distress: in such a case he was the very last man that would have given even the least momentary uneasiness to any one, had he been aware of it.

"The last time I saw Dr. Johnson was just before I went to France: he said, with a deep sigh, 'I wish I was going with you.' He had just then been disappointed of going to Italy. Of all men I ever knew, Dr. Johnson was the most instructive."

No. III.

TWO DIALOGUES

In imitation of Dr. Johnson's style of conversation, by SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS [1].

[*Referred to in p.* 169.]

[*The following jeu d'esprit was written by* Sir Joshua Reynolds *to illustrate a remark which he had made, "That Dr. Johnson considered Gar-*

[1] [These dialogues were printed in 1816 from the MS. of Sir Joshua, by his niece, Lady Thomond; they were not published, but distributed by her ladyship to some friends of Dr. Johnson and Sir Joshua. The copy which the editor has was spontaneously transmitted to him by Mrs. Gwynn, the friend of Goldsmith and of Johnson, whose early beauty is celebrated in the first part of this work (vol. i. p. 423), and who is still distinguished for her amiable character and high mental accomplishments. Lady Thomond, in the prefatory note, calls this a "*jeu d'esprit*," but the editor was informed by the late Sir George Beaumont, who knew all the parties, and to whom Reynolds himself gave a copy of it, that if the words *jeu d'esprit* were to be understood to imply that it was altogether an *invention* of Sir Joshua's, the term would be erroneous. The

rick as his property, and would never suffer any one to praise or abuse him but himself." In the first of these supposed dialogues, Sir Joshua *himself, by high encomiums upon Garrick, is represented as drawing down upon him Johnson's censure; in the second,* Mr. Gibbon, *by taking the opposite side, calls forth his praise.*]

JOHNSON AGAINST GARRICK.

DR. JOHNSON AND SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS.

"REYNOLDS. Let me alone, I'll bring him out. *(Aside.)* I have been thinking, Dr. Johnson, this morning, on a matter that has puzzled me very much; it is a subject that I dare say has often passed in your thoughts, and though *I* cannot, I dare say *you* have made up your mind upon it.

"JOHNSON. Tilly fally! what is all this preparation, what is all this mighty matter?

"REY. Why, it is a very weighty matter. The subject I have been thinking upon is, predestination and freewill, two things I cannot reconcile together for the life of me; in my opinion, Dr. Johnson, freewill and foreknowledge cannot be reconciled.

"JOHN. Sir, it is not of very great importance what your opinion is upon such a question.

'REY. But I meant only, Dr. Johnson, to know your opinion.

"JOHN. No, sir, you meant no such thing; you meant only to show these gentlemen that you are not the man they took you to be, but that you think of high matters sometimes, and that you may have the credit of having it said that you held an argument with Sam Johnson on predestination and freewill; a subject of that magnitude as to have engaged the attention of the world, to have perplexed the wisdom of man for these two thousand years; a subject on which the fallen angels, who *had yet not lost all their original brightness,* find themselves *in wandering mazes lost.* That such a subject could be discussed in the levity of convivial conversation, is a degree of absurdity beyond what is easily conceivable.

"REY. It is so, as you say, to be sure; I talked once to our friend Garrick upon this subject, but I remember we could make nothing of it.

"JOHN. O noble pair!

substance, and many of the expressions, of the dialogues did really occur; Sir Joshua did little more than collect, as if into *two* conversations, what had been uttered at *many,* and heighten the effect by the juxta-position of such discordant opinions. We cannot, however, but observe how very faint, one might almost say feeble, is Sir Joshua's dialogues when compared with the characteristic fire and dramatic spirit of Mr. Boswell. —ED.]

"REY. Garrick was a clever fellow, Dr. J.; Garrick, take him altogether, was certainly a very great man.

"JOHN. Garrick, sir, may be a great man in your opinion, as far as I know; but he was not so in mine; little things are great to little men.

"REY. I have heard you say, Dr. Johnson ——

"JOHN. Sir, you never heard me say that David Garrick was a great man; you may have heard me say that Garrick was a good repeater—of other men's words—words put into his mouth by other men; this makes but a faint approach towards being a great man.

"REY. But take Garrick upon the whole, now, in regard to conversation——

"JOHN. Well, sir, in regard to conversation, I never discovered in the conversation of David Garrick any intellectual energy, any wide grasp of thought, any extensive comprehension of mind, or that he possessed any of those powers to which *great* could, with any degree of propriety, be applied——

"REY. But still——

"JOHN. Hold, sir, I have not done—there are, to be sure, in the laxity of colloquial speech, various kinds of greatness; a man may be a great tobacconist, a man may be a great painter, he may be likewise a great mimick; now you may be the one, and Garrick the other, and yet neither of you be great men.

"REY. But Dr. Johnson——

"JOHN. Hold, sir, I have often lamented how dangerous it is to investigate and to discriminate character, to men who have no discriminative powers.

"REY. But Garrick, as a companion, I heard you say—no longer ago than last Wednesday, at Mr. Thrale's table——

"JOHN. You tease me, sir. Whatever you may have heard me say, no longer ago than last Wednesday, at Mr. Thrale's table, I tell you I do not say so now; besides, as I said before, you may not have understood me, you misapprehended me, you may not have heard me.

"REY. I am very sure I heard you.

"JOHN. Besides, besides, sir, besides,—do you not know,—are you so ignorant as not to know, that it is the highest degree of rudeness to quote a man against himself?

"REY. But if you differ from yourself, and give one opinion to-day——

"JOHN. Have done, sir; the company you see are tired, as well as myself."

T' OTHER SIDE.

DR. JOHNSON AND MR. GIBBON.

"JOHNSON. No, sir; Garrick's fame was prodigious, not only in England, but over all Europe; even in Russia I have been told he was a proverb; when any one had repeated well he was called a second Garrick.

"GIBBON. I think he had full as much reputation as he deserved.

"JOHN. I do not pretend to know, sir, what your meaning may be, by saying he had as much reputation as he deserved; he deserved much, and he had much.

"GIB. Why surely, Dr. Johnson, his merit was in small things only, he had none of those qualities that make a real great man.

"JOHN. Sir, I as little understand what your meaning may be when you speak of the qualities that make a great man; it is a vague term. Garrick was no common man; a man above the common size of men may surely, without any great impropriety, be called a great man. In my opinion he has very reasonably fulfilled the prophecy which he once reminded me of having made to his mother, when she asked me how little David went on at school, that I should say to her, that he would come to be hanged, or come to be a great man. No, sir, it is undoubtedly true that the same qualities, united with virtue or with vice, make a hero or a rogue, a great general or a highwayman. Now Garrick, we are sure, was never hanged, and in regard to his being a great man, you must take the whole man together. It must be considered in how many things Garrick excelled in which every man desires to excel: setting aside his excellence as an actor, in which he is acknowledged to be unrivalled; as a man, as a poet, as a convivial companion, you will find but few his equals, and none his superior. As a man, he was kind, friendly, benevolent, and generous.

"GIB. Of Garrick's generosity I never heard; I understood his character to be totally the reverse, and that he was reckoned to have loved money.

"JOHN. That he loved money, nobody will dispute; who does not? but if you mean, by loving money, that he was parsimonious to a fault, sir, you have been misinformed. To Foote, and such scoundrels, who circulated those reports, to such profligate spendthrifts prudence is meanness, and economy is avarice. That Garrick, in early youth, was brought up in strict habits of economy I believe, and that they were necessary, I have heard from himself; to suppose that Garrick might inadvertently act from this habit, and be saving in small things, can be no wonder; but let it be remembered at the

same time, that if he was frugal by habit, he was liberal from principle; that when he acted from reflection he did what his fortune enabled him to do, and what was expected from such a fortune. I remember no instance of David's parsimony but once, when he stopped Mrs. Woffington from replenishing the tea-pot; it was already, he said, as red as blood; and this instance is doubtful, and happened many years ago. In the latter part of his life I observed no blamable parsimony in David; his table was elegant and even splendid; his house both in town and country, his equipage, and I think all his habits of life, were such as might be expected from a man who had acquired great riches. In regard to his generosity, which you seem to question, I shall only say, there is no man to whom I would apply with more confidence of success, for the loan of two hundred pounds to assist a common friend, than to David, and this too with very little, if any, probability of its being repaid.

"GIB. You were going to say something of him as a writer—you don't rate him very high as a poet.

"JOHN. Sir, a man may be a respectable poet without being a Homer, as a man may be a good player without being a Garrick. In the lighter kinds of poetry, in the appendages of the drama, he was, *if not the first, in the very first class.* He had a readiness and facility, a dexterity of mind that appeared extraordinary even to men of experience, and who are not apt to wonder from ignorance. Writing prologues, epilogues, and epigrams, he said he considered as his trade, and he was, what a man should be, always, and at all times ready at his trade. He required two hours for a prologue or epilogue, and five minutes for an epigram. Once at Burke's table the company proposed a subject, and Garrick finished his epigram within the time; the same experiment was repeated in the garden, and with the same success.

"GIB. Garrick had some flippancy of parts, to be sure, and was brisk and lively in company, and by the help of mimickry and story-telling, made himself a pleasant companion; but here the whole world gave the superiority to Foote, and Garrick himself appears to have felt as if his genius was rebuked by the superior powers of Foote. It has been often observed, that Garrick never dared to enter into competition with him, but was content to act an under part to bring Foote out.

"JOHN. That this conduct of Garrick's might be interpreted by the gross minds of Foote and his friends, as if he was afraid to encounter him, I can easily imagine. Of the natural superiority of Garrick over Foote, this conduct is an instance; he disdained entering into competition with such a fellow, and made him the buffoon of the company; or, as you say, brought him out. And what was at last brought out but coarse jests and vulgar merriment, indecency and impiety, a

relation of events which, upon the face of them, could never have happened, characters grossly conceived and as coarsely represented? Foote was even no mimick; he went out of himself, it is true, but without going into another man; he was excelled by Garrick even in this, which is considered as Foote's greatest excellence. Garrick, besides his exact imitation of the voice and gesture of his original, to a degree of refinement of which Foote had no conception, exhibited the mind and mode of thinking of the person imitated. Besides, Garrick confined his powers within the limits of decency; he had a character to preserve, Foote had none. By Foote's buffoonery and broad-faced merriment, private friendship, public decency, and every thing estimable amongst men, were trod under foot. We all know the difference of their reception in the world. No man, however high in rank or literature, but was proud to know Garrick, and was glad to have him at his table; no man ever considered or treated Garrick as a player; he may be said to have stepped out of his own rank into a higher, and by raising himself, he raised the rank of his profession. At a convivial table his exhilarating powers were unrivalled; he was lively, entertaining, quick in discerning the ridicule of life, and as ready in representing it; and on graver subjects there were few topics in which he could not bear his part. It is injurious to the character of Garrick to be named in the same breath with Foote. That Foote was admitted sometimes into good company (to do the man what credit I can) I will allow, but then it was merely to play tricks: Foote's merriment was that of a buffoon, and Garrick's that of a gentleman.

"GIB. I have been told, on the contrary, that Garrick in company had not the easy manners of a gentleman.

"JOHN. Sir, I don't know what you may have been told, or what your ideas may be, of the manners of gentlemen: Garrick had no vulgarity in his manners; it is true Garrick had not the airiness of a fop, nor did he assume an affected indifference to what was passing; he did not lounge from the table to the window, and from thence to the fire, or whilst you were addressing your discourse to him, turn from you and talk to his next neighbour, or give any indication that he was tired of your company; if such manners form your ideas of a fine gentleman, Garrick certainly had them not.

"GIB. I mean that Garrick was more overawed by the presence of the great, and more obsequious to rank, than Foote, who considered himself as their equal, and treated them with the same familiarity as they treated each other.

"JOHN. He did so, and what did the fellow get by it? The grossness of his mind prevented him from seeing that this familiarity was merely suffered as they would play with a dog; he got no ground by affecting to call peers by their surnames; the foolish fellow fancied

that lowering them was raising himself to their level; this affectation of familiarity with the great, this childish ambition of momentary exaltation obtained by the neglect of those ceremonies which custom has established as the barriers between one order of society and another, only showed his folly and meanness; he did not see that by encroaching on others' dignity, he puts himself in their power either to be repelled with helpless indignity, or endured by clemency and condescension. Garrick, by paying due respect to rank, respected himself; what he gave was returned, and what was returned he kept for ever; his advancement was on firm ground, he was recognized in public as well as respected in private, and as no man was ever more courted and better received by the public, so no man was ever less spoiled by its flattery: Garrick continued advancing to the last, till he had acquired every advantage that high birth or title could bestow, except the precedence of going into a room; but when he was there, he was treated with as much attention as the first man at the table. It is to the credit of Garrick, that he never laid any claim to this distinction; it was as voluntarily allowed as if it had been his birthright. In this, I confess, I looked on David with some degree of envy, not so much for the respect he received, as for the manner of its being acquired; what fell into his lap unsought, I have been forced to claim. I began the world by fighting my way. There was something about me that invited insult, or at least a disposition to neglect, and I was equally disposed to repel insult and to claim attention, and I fear continue too much in this disposition now it is no longer necessary; I receive at present as much favour as I have a right to expect. I am not one of the complainers of the neglect of merit.

"GIB. *Your* pretensions, Dr. Johnson, nobody will dispute; I cannot place Garrick on the same footing: your reputation will continue increasing after your death, when Garrick will be totally forgot; you will be for ever considered as a classic——

"JOHN. Enough, sir, enough; the company would be better pleased to see us quarrel than bandying compliments.

"GIB. But you must allow, Dr. Johnson, that Garrick was too much a slave to fame, or rather to the mean ambition of living with the great, terribly afraid of making himself cheap even with them; by which he debarred himself of much pleasant society. Employing so much attention, and so much management upon such little things, implies, I think, a little mind. It was observed by his friend Colman, that he never went into company but with a plot how to get out of it; he was every minute called out, and went off or returned as there was or was not a probability of his shining.

"JOHN. In regard to his mean ambition, as you call it, of living with the great, what was the boast of Pope, and is every man's wish, can be no reproach to Garrick; he who says he despises it knows he

lies. That Garrick husbanded his fame, the fame which he had justly acquired both at the theatre and at the table, is not denied; but where is the blame either in the one or the other, of leaving as little as he could to chance? Besides, sir, consider what you have said; you first deny Garrick's pretensions to fame, and then accuse him of too great an attention to preserve what he never possessed.

"GIB. I don't understand——

"JOHN. Sir, I can't help that.

"GIB. Well, but, Dr. Johnson, you will not vindicate him in his over and above attention to his fame, his inordinate desire to exhibit himself to new men, like a coquette, ever seeking after new conquests, to the total neglect of old friends and admirers;—

'He threw off his friends like a huntsman his pack,'

always looking out for new game.

"JOHN. When you quoted the line from Goldsmith, you ought, in fairness, to have given what followed:—

'He knew when he pleased he could whistle them back;'

which implies at least that he possessed a power over other men's minds approaching to fascination; but consider, sir, what is to be done: here is a man whom every other man desired to know. Garrick could not receive and cultivate all, according to each man's conception of his own value: we are all apt enough to consider ourselves as possessing a right to be excepted from the common crowd; besides, sir, I do not see why that should be imputed to him as a crime, which we all so irresistibly feel and practise; we all make a greater exertion of the presence of new men than old acquaintance; it is undoubtedly true that Garrick divided his attention among so many, that but little was left to the share of any individual; like the extension and dissipation of water into dew, there was not quantity united sufficiently to quench any man's thirst; but this is the inevitable state of things: Garrick, no more than another man, could unite what, in their natures, are incompatible.

"GIB. But Garrick not only was excluded by this means from real friendship, but accused of treating those whom he called friends with insincerity and double dealings.

"JOHN. Sir, it is not true; his character in that respect is misunderstood: Garrick was, to be sure, very ready in promising, but he intended at that time to fulfil his promise; he intended no deceit: his politeness or his good nature, call it which you will, made him unwilling to deny; he wanted the courage to say *No* even to unreasonable demands. This was the great error of his life: by raising expectations which he did not, perhaps could not gratify, he made many

enemies; at the same time it must be remembered, that this error proceeded from the same cause which produced many of his virtues. Friendships from warmth of temper too suddenly taken up, and too violent to continue, ended as they were like to do, in disappointment; enmity succeeded disappointment; his friends became his enemies; and those having been fostered in his bosom, well knew his sensibility to reproach, and they took care that he should be amply supplied with such bitter potions as they were capable of administering; their impotent efforts he ought to have despised, but he felt them; nor did he affect insensibility.

"GIB. And that sensibility probably shortened his life.

"JOHN. No, sir, he died of a disorder of which you or any other man may die, without being killed by too much sensibility.

"GIB. But you will allow, however, that this sensibility, those fine feelings, made him the great actor he was.

"JOHN. This is all cant, fit only for kitchen wenches and chambermaids: Garrick's trade was to represent passion, not to feel it. Ask Reynolds whether he felt the distress of Count Hugolino when he drew it.

"GIB. But surely he feels the passion at the moment he is representing it.

"JOHN. About as much as Punch feels. That Garrick himself gave into this foppery of feelings I can easily believe; but he knew at the same time that he lied. He might think it right as far as I know, to have what fools imagined he ought to have; but it is amazing that any one should be so ignorant as to think that an actor will risk his reputation by depending on the feelings that shall be excited in the presence of two hundred people, on the repetition of certain words which he has repeated two hundred times before in what actors call their study. No, sir, Garrick left nothing to chance; every gesture, every expression of countenance, and variation of voice, was settled in his closet before he set his foot upon the stage[1]."

[1] [This is conformable with the opinion of Grimm and Diderot, and with the admission of Mr. Kemble; but it must not be understood too literally. A great actor prepares in his study, positions, attitudes, the particular mode of uttering certain passages, and even the tone which is to be adopted; and having once ascertained, both by thought and experience, what is best, he will naturally adhere to that, however often he may play the part; but it is equally certain, that there is a large portion of the merit of a great theatrical exhibition which is not reducible to any rule, and which depends, not only on the general powers of the performer, but on his health, his spirits, and other personal circumstances of the moment which may tend to encourage or restrain his powers. And it may be safely affirmed, that although no actor ever fancies himself Othello, or any actress Calista, yet that the unpremeditated emotions last alluded to constitute a great part of the charm which distinguishes on the stage *excellence* from *mediocrity*.—ED.]

No. IV.

[ARGUMENT against a prosecution by the Procurators of Edinburgh against the publisher of a libel, *referred to in p.* 504.]

"All injury is either of the person, the fortune, or the fame. Now it is a certain thing, it is proverbially known, that *a jest breaks no bones.* They never have gained half-a-crown less in the whole profession since this mischievous paragraph has appeared; and, as to their reputation, what is their reputation but an instrument of getting money? If, therefore, they have lost no money, the question upon reputation may be answered by a very old position,—*De minimis non curat prætor.*

"Whether there was, or was not, an *animus injuriandi* is not worth inquiring, if no *injuria* can be proved. But the truth is, there was no *animus injuriandi.* It was only an *animus irritandi*[1], which, happening to be exercised upon a *genus irritabile,* produced unexpected violence of resentment. Their irritability arose only from an opinion of their own importance, and their delight in their new exaltation. What might have been borne by a *procurator,* could not be borne by a *solicitor.* Your lordships well know that *honores mutant mores.* Titles and dignities play strongly on the fancy. As a madman is apt to think himself grown suddenly great, so he that grows suddenly great is apt to borrow a little from the madman. To co-operate with their resentment would be to promote their frenzy; nor is it possible to guess to what they might proceed, if to the new title of solicitor should be added the elation of victory and triumph.

"We consider your lordships as the protectors of our rights, and the guardians of our virtues; but believe it not included in your high office, that you should flatter our vices, or solace our vanity; and, as vanity only dictates this prosecution, it is humbly hoped your lordships will dismiss it.

"If every attempt, however light or ludicrous, to lessen another's reputation, is to be punished by a judicial sentence, what punishment can be sufficiently severe for him who attempts to diminish the reputation of the supreme court of justice, by reclaiming upon a cause already determined, without any change in the state of the question? Does it not imply hopes that the judges will change their opinion? Is not uncertainty and inconstancy in the highest degree disreputable

[1] Mr. Robertson altered this word to *jocandi,* he having found in Blackstone that to *irritate* is actionable.—BOSWELL.

to a court? Does it not suppose, that the former judgment was temerarious or negligent? Does it not lessen the confidence of the publick? Will it not be said that *jus est aut incognitum aut vagum?* and will not the consequence be drawn, *misera est servitus?* Will not the rules of action be obscure? Will not he who knows himself wronged to-day, hope that the courts of justice will think him right to-morrow? Surely, my lords, these are attempts of dangerous tendency, which the solicitors, as men versed in the law, should have foreseen and avoided. It was natural for an ignorant printer to appeal from the lord ordinary; but from lawyers, the descendants of lawyers, who have practised for three hundred years, and have now raised themselves to a higher denomination, it might be expected that they should know the reverence due to a judicial determination; and, having been once dismissed, should sit down in silence."

No. V.

CORRESPONDENCE [1]

Between Miss Boothby [2] and Dr. Johnson.

[*Referred to in* vol. i. p. 51, vol. iii. p. 516, vol. iv. p. 427.]

PREFACE

[*Of Mr. Richard Wright, surgeon in Lichfield, the original editor of the little volume containing Dr. Johnson's notes of his early life, and the correspondence with Miss Boothby.*]

It will be expected, that the editor of the following curious and interesting pages should give an account of the manner in which the original MSS. came into his possession.

[1] [The Editor had originally intended to have given only a *selection* (see vol. iii. p. 516) of Miss Boothby's letters, but as the little volume in which they were published, by R. Phillips, 1805, (see v. i. p. 51), is now become scarce; and as the whole affair is a curious episode in Dr. Johnson's history, the Editor has, on reconsideration, preserved the entire correspondence.—ED.]

[2] [Miss Hill Boothby was the daughter of Mr. Brook Boothby and his second lady, Elizabeth Fitzherbert. Mr. Boothby was the son of Sir William, the second baronet, by Miss Hill Brooke, and the father of Sir Brooke, the fourth baronet. Miss Boothby was above a year older than Dr. Johnson. Though her mother's name was *Fitzherbert*, she was but distantly related to the Tissington family. She was attached to Mrs. Fitzherbert by an enthusiastic and spiritualized friendship, and on her death Miss Boothby devoted herself to the care of her six children. The Rev. Richard Graves, author of the Spiritual Quixote, was for some time domestic chaplain at Tissington, and as my

Mr. Boswell, in his admirable Life of Dr. Johnson, thus observes: "The consideration of the numerous papers of which he was possessed seems to have struck Johnson's mind with a sudden anxiety; and, as they were in great confusion, it is much to be lamented that he had not intrusted some faithful and discreet person with the care and selection of them; instead of which he, in a precipitate manner, burnt masses of them, as I should apprehend, with little regard to discrimination. . . . . Two very valuable articles, I am sure, we have lost, which were two quarto volumes, containing a full, fair, and most particular account of his own life, from his earliest recollection[1]."

It does not appear that the MS., from which the following short account of Dr. Johnson's Early Life is copied, was one[2] of the two volumes to which Boswell alludes; although it is evident, from his enumeration of particular dates in the blank pages of the book, that he intended to have finished these Annals, according to this plan, with the same minuteness of description, in every circumstance and event.

This volume was among that mass of papers which were ordered to be committed to the flames a few days before his death, thirty-two pages of which were torn out by himself and destroyed; the contents of those which remain are here given with fidelity and exactness.

venerable and amiable friend, Lord St. Helens, informs me, described in that novel the several members of that family, and their visiters, with great accuracy. It may be as well to preserve here the key which Lord St. Helens has given me to the characters introduced into the novel:

Sir William Forrester . .	Mr. Fitzherbert.
Lady Forrester . .	Mrs. Fitzherbert.
Lord —— . . .	L. P. Meynell, Esq. of Bradley Park, Mrs. F.'s father.
Kitty Forrester . .	Catherine Fitzherbert, afterwards Mrs. Bateman.
Miss *Sainthill* . . .	Miss Hill Boothby.
Colonel Rappee . .	Colonel Deane.
Bob Tench . . .	Mr. Nicholas Thornhill.
Young Templar . .	Mr. C. Pratt, afterwards Lord Camden.

Even the inferior characters were drawn from the life. The jacobite barber was one Daniel Shipley; George, the butler, was John Latham; and Molly, the lady's maid, was Mary Etches, afterwards married to Latham; Wildgoose, the hero, was supposed to be a portrait of Mr. Graves's own brother; and Lord St. Helens adds, that although the author, to heighten the contrast between him and his brother, describes himself as a *sporting parson*, he was really no such thing, but, on the contrary, a worthy and conscientious parish priest. There is an account of him in the "Public Characters" for 1800.—See *ante*, vol. iii. p. 212, where Mr. Graves is erroneously stated to have been a *tutor* in Mr. Fitzherbert's family. He was the minister of the parish, and acted as domestic chaplain.—Ed.]

[1] *Post*, vol. v. p. 316.—Wright.

[2] [It certainly was not. Mr. Wright's book was, he tells us, half destroyed on the 1st Dec. 1784, and the two volumes alluded to were safe in Sir J. Hawkins's pocket on the 5th (*post*, vol. v. p. 336.)—Ed.]

Francis Barber, his black servant, unwilling that all the MSS. of his illustrious master should be utterly lost, preserved these relics from the flames. By purchase from Barber's widow they came into the possession of the editor [1].

Dr. Johnson's acquaintance with Miss Hill Boothby, aunt of Sir Brooke Boothby, commenced at Ashbourne, between the years 1737 and 1740, when he was upon a visit at Ashbourne to his friend Dr. Taylor [2]. As an evidence of the value which he set upon the letters that he received from her, he numbered them, wrote the dates upon them, and had them bound together in one volume. His intimacy and correspondence with Miss H. Boothby were uninterruptedly continued till her death.

To say that these letters do credit to the understanding of that lady is faint praise. Dr. Johnson himself said of her, that "she had the best understanding he ever met with in any human being [3]."

As they betray no family secrets, but contain reflections upon serious and literary subjects, and display with what benevolent ardour Dr. Johnson valued her friendship, they form an interesting and proper appendage to this little tract. The Doctor's letters to Miss Boothby are printed in Mrs. Piozzi's Collection, and in Boswell's Life of him [4].

[1] [So far relates to the *Early Life*, which is contained in the first 32 pages of Mr. Wright's little volume, and which (except a few observations on some school books) is inserted in different parts of the first volume of this edition: what follows relates to the correspondence with Miss Boothby.—Ed.]

[2] [This statement is founded on the assertion of an anonymous lady, quoted by Mr. Boswell (*ante*, v. i. p. 51), of the correctness of which the Editor had already expressed his suspicion; but he now, on farther consideration, disbelieves most, if not all, the particulars of that statement. It appears certain that Dr. Johnson did not leave London between 1737 and 1740. Mrs. Fitzherbert was not married till 1744. The first of Miss Boothby's letters, dated 1753, seems to prove that her acquaintance with Dr. Johnson was then recent—it is certainly her *first letter* to him. Lord St. Helens does not recollect to have heard how Dr. Johnson's acquaintance with his parents began, but thinks it not improbable that Dr. Lawrence, who had married a Derbyshire lady, may have been the original link of acquaintance; and it appears likely, from several passages of these letters, that it was in *his society* that Miss Boothby, on coming to town in 1753, made Johnson's acquaintance. That the acquaintance was *not* made in early life, and in Derbyshire, seems clear, and that Johnson never was at Mr. Fitzherbert's seat is almost certain. If he had had any local knowledge of it, we should not find Miss Boothby telling him that she was "*then* at Tissington, near Ashbourne in Derbyshire;" nor is it probable, if Johnson had got acquainted with Miss Boothby while he was on a visit with Dr. Taylor at Ashbourne, that there should be no allusion to Dr. Taylor, or to Ashbourne, or to any such previous acquaintance in the whole of this correspondence. Indeed, it seems clear, from the history of Dr. Johnson's own life, that he had not been down to Staffordshire, or Derbyshire, from 1737 till after his mother's death in 1759, nor even, the Editor believes, till after the grant of his pension in 1762.—Ed.]

[3] [Another gross error of Mr. Wright: Johnson said this, not of *Miss Boothby*, but of *Mrs. Fitzherbert*. See *ante*, vol. i. p. 51.—Ed.]

[4] [Only one of his letters is published by Mr. Boswell, "the merits of the others not being," said he, (*ante*, vol. iv. p. 426. *n.*) "so apparent." The truth probably was, that Boswell thought they were written in a style that might afford some scope to ridicule or misrepresentation against his revered friend.—Ed.]

The original MSS. are deposited in the museum of antiquities and natural curiosities, belonging to the editor; which is open to the inspection of the public.

Lichfield, 2d March, 1805.

LETTER I.

"MISS BOOTHBY TO DR. JOHNSON.

"30th July, 1753.

"SIR,—I assure you I esteemed your request to write to and hear from me, as an honour done me, and received your letter with much pleasure. Most people, and particularly a lady, would tremble at taking up the pen to reply to a letter from Mr. Johnson; but I had the pleasure of experiencing so much candour and goodness in the man, that I have no fear of the eminent genius, extensive learning, accurate judgment, and every other happy talent which distinguish and complete the author. In a correspondence with you, sir, I am confident I shall be so far from hazarding any thing by a discovery of my literary poverty, that in this view I shall be so much the more a gainer: a desire to be such will be a motive sufficient to engage your generosity to supply me out of your large stock, as far as I am capable of receiving so high an advantage.

"Indeed you greatly overrate my poor capacity to follow the great examples of virtue, which are deeply engraven in my heart. One[1] of the most eminent of these you have seen, and justly admired and loved. It is but a faint ray of that brightness of virtue which shone in her, through every part of her life, which is, as by reflection only, to be seen in me, her unworthy substitute in the care of her dearest remains.

"Let me beg you therefore to give honour to whom honour is due. Treat me as a friend, dear sir; exercise the kindest office of one towards me; tell me my faults, and assist me in rectifying them. Do not give me the least reason to doubt your sincerity by any thing that has the air of compliment. Female vanity has, I believe, no small share in the increase of the difficulties you have found in one part of your labours, I mean that of explaining in your Dictionary the general and popular language. You should therefore treat this vanity as an enemy, and be very far from throwing any temptation in its way.

"I have great obligations to Dr. Lawrence and his family. They have hearts like yours; and therefore I do not wonder they are partial in judging of me, who have a friendly and grateful heart. You are in the right: I should have been most heinously offended, if you had omitted a particular inquiry after my dear charge. They

[1] [Mrs. Fitzherbert, who had died a few months before.—ED.]

are all six[1] in perfect health, and can make as much noise as any six children in England. They amply reward all my daily labours for them: the eldest has her dear mother's disposition and capacity. I am enabled to march on steadily with my shattered frame; how long I think not of, but cheerfully wait for

'Kind Nature's signal of retreat'

whenever it pleases God.

"I hope, however, to see you the author of a Great Dictionary before I go, and to have the pleasure of joining with a whole nation in your applause; and when you have put into their hands the means of speaking and writing the English language with as much purity and propriety as it is capable of being spoken and wrote, give me leave to recommend to you your future studies and labours—let them all be devoted to the glory of God, to exemplify the true use of all languages and tongues. The vanity of all human wishes, you have finely and forcibly proved; what is then left for you, but to seek after certain and permanent happiness, divine and eternal goods,

('These goods he grants, who grants the power to gain,')

and with all the great talents bestowed on you, to call others to the same pursuit. How should I rejoice to see your pen wholly employed in the glorious Christian cause; inviting all into the ways of pleasantness; proving and displaying the only paths to peace. Wherever you have chosen this most interesting subject of religion in your Ramblers, I have warmly wished you never to choose any other. You see, sir, I am much inclined to indulge the liberty you have given me of conversing with you in this way. But I will not please myself longer at the hazard of tiring you. One request, however, I must make; some of those parts of your life, which, you say, you pass in idleness, pray, for the future, bestow on one who has a great regard for you, will highly value every testimony of your esteem, and is, sir, your much obliged friend and humble servant,

"H. BOOTHBY."

[1] [These six children were, as Lord St. Helens informs me, Judith, born 1746, whom Miss Boothby calls Miss Fitzherbert, a young person of uncommon promise, but who died in 1758; William, born in 1748, created a baronet in 1783, the father of the present Sir Henry Fitzherbert; John and Thomas, who both died young; Selina, born in 1751, married to H. Galley Knight, Esq.; she died in 1823, leaving an only son, well known in the literary world; and, lastly, Lord St. Helens himself, born a few weeks before his mother's death, who enjoys, the editor is happy to add, excellent health, and is distinguished by the elegant amenity of his manners and the pleasantry and acuteness of his conversation. It is pleasing and consolatory to find in one old enough to have been for thirty years known to Dr. Johnson, such an example of the *mens sana in corpore sano*.—ED.]

"My good wishes attend Miss Williams [1]. Mr. Fitzherbert returns you his compliments. We are now at Tissington, near Ashbourne, Derbyshire."

LETTER II.

"Tissington, 4th Dec. 1753.

"DEAR SIR,—You might be very sure that something extraordinary and unavoidable must keep me so long silent, to a person whom from every motive I esteem and regard, and consequently love to converse with. I will honestly own to you likewise, that I was extremely pleased with your letter, as one of the prettiest things I ever read in my life, and longed to praise you in reply to it, as a proof of my being convinced that, as a friend, I owed you this honest tribute. But, alas! all my purposes of writing were prevented; first, by a series of family engagements and perplexities, which much affected me, and lately, by what, I believe, is in part the consequence of them, sickness. I have a very tender weak body, and it is next to a miracle it has stood up so long as for seven months without one day's confinement to a room; but, on last Friday se'nnight, a violent fit of the colic seized me, and, till yesterday, disabled me from going out of my room. I am now, thank God, recovering, and only low, weak, and languid. My dear children have been and are all well, except some trifling colds and little disorders: and for them nothing is too hard to suffer, too arduous to attempt; my confidence is strong, founded on a rock; and I am assured I shall be supported for them, till it pleases God to raise them up a better helper. O, certainly, I allow a friend may be a comfort, and a great one; and, I assure you, dear sir, your last kind notice of me brought comfort with it, for which I thank you. Please not to mention any thing more of me in Essex-street, or to any, than that various engagements and sickness have made me appear negligent. I am no complainer, but, on the contrary, think every dispensation of Providence a blessing; enjoy the sweet portion, nor quarrel with the medicinal draught, because it is bitter. What I have hinted to you, of perplexity, &c. is in the confidence of friendship.

"May all your labours be blest with success! Excuse my trembling hand, which cannot do more at present than assure you I am, dear sir, your much obliged and sincere friend, "H. BOOTHBY.

"Some acquaintance of mine at a distance will have it that you sometimes write an *Adventurer*; for this reason, because they like some of those papers better than any, except the *Ramblers*. I have not seen any. Pray tell me if I must; for, if your pen has any share

[1] [Had there been an old friendship, formed in Derbyshire, the information that she was *now at Tissington, near Ashbourne, in Derbyshire*, would have been quite superfluous.—ED.]

in them, I shall take it ill to be deprived of the benefit. Be so good as to let me hear from you, when you have leisure."

LETTER III.

"Tissington, 29th Dec. 1753.

"DEAR SIR,—You very obligingly say, 'Few are so busy as not to find time to do what they delight in doing.' That I have been one of those few, my not having, till now, found time to answer your last kind letter may convince you. My indisposition, and confinement on that account, made it necessary for me to double my application for my little flock; and, as my strength increased, I found occasions to exercise its increase also; so that I really have not had a moment to spare. I know you will be better pleased to infer from hence that my health is much mended, than you would be with the finest and most artful arrangement of abstract reasoning that ever was penned. I have been a great moralizer; and, perhaps, if all my speculative chains were linked together, they would fill a folio as large as the largest of those many wrote by the philosophical Duchess of Newcastle, and be just as useful as her labours. But I have wholly given up all attempts of this sort, convinced by experience that they could at most afford only a present relief. The one remedy for all and every kind of sorrow, the deeply experienced royal prophet thus expresses:

"'In the multitude of sorrows which I had in my heart, thy comforts have refreshed my soul.'

'The sovereign balm for every heart-felt wound
Is only in the Heavenly Gilead found:
Whate'er the sage philosophers pretend,
Man's wisdom may awhile man's pain suspend;
But can no more—wisdom divine must cure,
And love inspire, which all things can endure.'

"As I think I write; and express my thoughts in words that first offer, sans premeditation, as you see. As I have told you before, I write to the friend, not to the Mr. Johnson, who himself writes better than any man. I shall comply with your request, and not inclose this; though at the same time I am conscious I have so little claim to a place among your riches, that a waste paper drawer will be a much properer one for my poor productions: however, if they have this merit, and you regard them as proofs that I much esteem you, they will answer my purpose, which is that of being regarded as, dear sir, your affectionate and sincere friend, "H. BOOTHBY.

"My jewels are all well.

"One reason for my inclosing my former letters was the not being sure of your right direction, but I hope I have recollected one. You have not answered my question [1] in my last postscript."

[1] [Relative to the *Adventurer*.—ED.]

LETTER IV.

"Saturday, 16th Feb. 1754.

"DEAR SIR,—I could almost think you had been long silent[1] on purpose that you might make the prettiest reflections on that silence imaginable; but I know you never need auxiliaries; your own powers are on every occasion abundantly sufficient. I come now only, as it were, to call upon you in a hurry, and to tell you I am going to the Bath. So it is determined for me. Lodgings are taken; and on Monday we are to set out, Mr. Fitzherbert, the two eldest dear ones, and myself. This change of place for six or eight weeks I must notify to you, for fear I should be deprived of a letter of yours a day longer than your own affairs make necessary. If nothing unforeseen prevents, *Mrs. Hill Boothby* will be found on *the South Parade, Bath,* by a letter directed there, after the next week, for we shall travel slowly.

"I will add a few more words, though I am very busy, and a very few will fully show my thoughts on *morality.* The Saviour of the world, truth itself says, '*He came not to destroy the law, but to fulfil it.*'

"I wonder not at your hesitating to impart a secret to a woman; but am the more obliged to you for communicating it as a secret, after so hesitating. Such a mark of your deliberate confidence shall be strictly regarded; and I shall seek for letter T[2], that I may read with redoubled pleasure. I want to know when the *Great Dictionary* will prove itself truly so, by appearing. Every thing that relates to Mr. Johnson has the best wishes of a friendly heart; here I include Mrs. Williams, and desire she will accept her share, which I am sure she will with pleasure, on account of my being, dear sir, your sincere friend, and much obliged humble servant, "H. BOOTHBY.

"P.S. As a friend of yours and Dr. L[awrence]'s, and one who seems worthy to be such, I am solicitous to inquire after the health of Dr. Bathurst[3].

"Excuse hurry and its effects—I mean my health is very weak, and I have much to do."

[1] [It is evident that Johnson's share of the correspondence was considerable, but, except a few towards the close, none of his letters have been preserved.—ED.]

[2] [See *ante*, v. i. p. 240, Editor's note. There can no longer be any doubt that Johnson was the author of the papers in the *Adventurer* marked T., and it seems probable, from Miss Boothby's emphatic statement, that she will read them with *redoubled* pleasure, that Johnson had told her that their common friend, Dr. Bathurst, had some interest in these papers. This supports Mrs. Williams's version, to which Johnson himself assented, though it does not explain how Johnson, distressed as he was, could afford to transfer to Dr. Bathurst the profits of his labours.—ED.]

[3] [This and the preceding paragraphs confirm the idea that, at Dr. Lawrence's, she had become acquainted with Johnson, Miss Williams, and Dr. Bathurst.—ED.]

LETTER V.

"Bath, 11th March, 1754.

"DEAR SIR,—It is impossible for me not to pay due regard to your kind solicitude for my better health. I shall therefore begin this letter, as you enjoin me, with an account of it, and tell you it really is better. The waters did not agree with me for some days after I began drinking them; but a little medicinal assistant administered by Dr. Hartley has so reconciled us, that for a week past they have been very salutary, given me an appetite, strength to use exercise without fatigue, whole nights of sweet sleep, and, what some people here would even prefer to these, better looks. For all these I am truly thankful to the giver of all good. You are doubtful whether I am not hurt by needless anxiety. Be no longer so; but be sure I am not: "sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof," is my preservative from all anxious thought for the morrow. I look not forward but to an eternity of peace and joy, and in this view all *vain* solicitude for the things of this life is taken away.

"You find pleasure in writing letters, and to *me*. I will put a stop to your further inquiry into the cause of this, by most truly assuring you, you give me a very great pleasure in reading your letters. I earnestly wish to be indeed your friend; and as far as I am capable of being such, I beg you always to be certain you are conferring an obligation when you confide in me, or command me. Immediately after I received your last letter, I tripped to the bookseller's for the *Gentleman's Magazine*[1]: many masterly strokes in the picture would have made the hand known to me, had not you named it. You will not be displeased when I tell you, one circumstance drew from me a silent tear, viz. '*one of the last acts of reason*,' &c. and this melting was part from natural tenderness, part from sympathy. How then can I condemn your sorrow? Yet I must, even because I have myself formerly been overwhelmed with fruitless grief for the loss of a friend; and therefore by miserable experience can warn all from splitting on this rock. Fly from it. Many are the resources shown to fly to; but believe me, there is but one that can avail—religion.

[1] In the *Gentleman's Magazine* for February, 1753, p. 81, is inserted the thirtieth number of the "Adventurer," dated February 17, 1753, which was written by Dr. Johnson. In the same Magazine, the account of the tragedy of the Gamester seems also to have been written by him.—WRIGHT. [Mr. Wright's note is careless and erroneous to an almost incredible degree. The *thirtieth* number of the *Adventurer* was *not* written by Dr. Johnson, whose first paper is the *thirty-fourth*. Nor does Miss Boothby allude to the *Gentleman's Magazine* for February, 1753, but to that for 1754; and in which there is *not* (any more than in the former) any paper of the *Adventurer* written by Johnson. The "*picture*" alluded to is Johnson's *Life of Cave*, the first article in the Magazine for February, 1754—and in that the passage referred to is to be found, descriptive of Cave's death: "*One of the last acts of reason which he exerted was, to press the hand which is now writing this little narrative.*"—ED.]

My situation here allows me but a very small portion of time to myself. Mr. Fitzherbert loves company, and has a good deal. I have some acquaintance, and a few friends here, who by turns engage me. Thus, though I never go into the public scenes here, I can seldom be alone: but I was determined to secure half an hour, to thank you, and to tell you, whenever you favour me with your letters, no engagements shall prevent my assuring you, I receive them in every place with the greatest pleasure, and am, and shall be, dear sir, your affectionate friend, "H. Boothby.

"Overlook all defects."

LETTER VI.

"Bath, 1st April, 1754.

"Dear sir,—That you find my health and well-being of consequence enough to be solicitous about, is a consideration so pleasing to me, that it is impossible your inquiries after them should ever be troublesome; and I have so high an opinion of your judgment, that, were I so situated as to consult it properly, and clearly state my questions, no nervous fine lady in Bath can more frequently have recourse to her doctor for advice, than I should have to you for yours in every doubtful point of conduct. The extreme cold has affected me; but, on the whole, I am, thank God, better than when I first came to this place: and so cheerful, that those of my acquaintance who think there is no other use for *spirits* but to *enjoy life in public*, to speak in their own style, wonder I do not frequent the rooms, balls, &c. But the dreaming part of my life is over, and all my pursuits are bent towards the securing—

'A sober certainty of waking bliss.'

I fly from dissipation to serious recollection, a sort of labour which is succeeded by a cheerful rest.

"Sir Charles Grandison I have not read. The reflection of having thrown away much precious time formerly in useless and unprofitable reading makes me extremely cautious; and I am in a bookseller's shop, like a bee in a garden, which you have seen fly round and round, from flower to flower, nor ever rests on any till it finds one which will yield pure honey. So I just touched Sir Charles Grandison in my examining flight; but, from my instinct, found there was no honey for *me*. Yet I am far from saying there may not be *miel très doux* for other kind of bees. However, I find the few to whose judgment I pay the greatest deference agree with you. Mr. Richardson's intention I honour; but to apply your own words *truly*[1] on this occa-

[1] [Johnson, in one of his letters, had evidently expressed some apprehension, that, "with the best intentions, he might be troublesome." Miss Boothby hints that such an apprehension on his part was unfounded.—Ed.]

sion—'The best intention may be troublesome.' And perhaps the same way and manner of executing may weary.. His mistaking the manners and life of those whom you truly say we *condescend* to call *great* people, is, I think, very pardonable. It would not be worth a naturalist's while to spend the greatest part of his time in observing the various tinctures a camelion takes from every body it approaches; and yet he must do so, to give a true representation of the colours of its life. You can make the application.

"I am entirely of your opinion with regard to education. I will labour all I can to produce plenty. But sanguine hopes will never tempt me to feel the torture of cutting disappointment. I have seen even Paul plant and Apollos water in vain, and am convinced God only can give the increase[1]. Mine is a fruitful soil. Miss Fitzherbert is yet every thing I can wish. Her eldest brother, a fine lively boy; but, *entre nous*, too indulgent a father will make it necessary for him to be sent to school—the sooner the better. Do you know of any school where a boy of six years old would be taken care of, chiefly as to his morals, and taught English, French, &c., till of a fit age for a public school?

"You do not say a word of the Dictionary. Miss Fitzherbert and I are impatient for its publication. I know you will be so indulgent to a friend, as to let me have the pleasure of hearing from you soon. My sincere regard and best wishes will always attend you, as I am, dear sir, your obliged and affectionate friend, "H. Boothby.

"A rainy day has prevented my drinking the waters, or I should have hazarded the head-ache, rather than have been longer silent."

LETTER VII.

"Bath, 20th May, 1754.

"Dear sir,—How was I surprised this morning, when, on opening a letter from you, with the pleasing expectation of its being a reply to one I wrote to you above a week ago, I found you kindly complaining of my silence. The reflections you begin your letter with seemed to me, at first, as if you had mistaken in directing it to me, as I well knew I felt, and had very lately expressed, a regard you could not have the least doubt of. The servant assures me he put my letter into the post-box himself. The post-master assures me, none put there ever fail. Yet somehow this has failed. I shall be sorry if it does not reach you, as there were some parts of it (for it was no short one) wrote with the freedom and confidence of friendship; and the whole sufficient to prove I am never long silent, but from necessity. If this wanderer does at last find you, dear sir, sig-

[1] ["I have planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase." 1 Cor. iii. 6. —Ed.]

nify its arrival as soon as possible to me. I would not have any thing lost which would be of the least value to you. But if it is lost, my intention and execution of it will still remain as testimonies for me; and if it is possible any one of your friends could give occasion for imputations of inconstancy and unkindness, you may be assured I am, on motives which are invariable, dear sir, your affectionate friend, "H. BOOTHBY.

"We are to leave this place on Tuesday the 28th, and set out for Tissington, where I long to be. I hope to take much better health thither, for the use of my dear little nursery."

LETTER VIII.

"Tissington, 5th June, 1754.

"DEAR SIR,—The first leisure moment I have, is most justly due to the compliance with your kind request to be informed of our arrival here; and with much pleasure I tell you, that, after a very good journey of four days, we were met with the bloom of health, and the endearing smiles of innocence, last Friday, at Tissington. The sensations of joy and thankfulness I experienced on this interview with the little creatures are not to be described: but, I am persuaded, no heart but hers who bequeathed them to me, ever so truly owned and received them as children.

"The loss of that letter I can no way account for—think no more of it. The subject of part of it was my then situation, and some reflections on the exceeding decline of conversation I observed in general: in which there seemed to be no other propriety than that of trifling French words to trifling somethings, not worthy of being called thoughts. I mentioned *Adventurers*, &c. and expressed, as well as I could, my particular satisfaction in Mr. Johnson's bullion, or rather pure sterling, amidst the tinsel base-mixed stuff I met with, and the high value I set on his letters. I gave you an abstract of Farneworth's History, which I have not time to repeat. I thank you for thinking of a school, and recommending one. Your recommendation would immediately fix me, if I alone was to determine. Two have been particularly recommended to Mr. Fitzherbert, Fulham and Wandsworth; and we have for some time been making all the inquiry we can into both. The last I have many objections to. I shall be much obliged to you for a more particular account of your friend; as—how many boys he takes—his rules and rates—and also if he has a French and dancing-master. I am strongly biassed towards a man you speak so well of. That—well instructed in virtue, is the thing I want: and a visit from you now and then, to confirm this instruction, is a high inducement. To some proper place I hope I shall be permitted to take this dear boy this summer, when I also

hope for the pleasure of seeing you. I know it will be a pleasure to you to assist me in an affair of such consequence, on many accounts; and I shall not say any more to Mr. Fitzherbert about Fulham till I hear from you; which, I assure you, I never do without great satisfaction; as I am, dear sir, your obliged and affectionate friend,

"H. Boothby.

"Excuse the effects of hurry. I have a cold I brought from Bath; otherwise I am in much better health than I have been for above twelve months past."

LETTER IX.

"Tissington, 1st July, 1754.

"Dear sir,—Truth is my delight: no establishment of custom will, I hope, ever make me deviate from it. And as an excuse seems to me a kind of screen, which has at least the appearance of concealing something we would not have seen, I make none. Nor shall I now say more upon my long silence, than that I have thought and felt it such myself, and from thence leave you to infer that it has been unavoidable. Your last letter was such a one as I expected from you on such a subject—that is, so clear, full, candid, sensible, kind, and friendly, as I hardly ever saw from any other. If I had your talent of expression, I could expatiate on this letter with great pleasure; but as I have not, I must deny myself this indulgence, and treasure up those observations I have made for my own use, which if I could in the best manner express, you do not need for yours. I communicated what you said of Mr. Elphinston[1] to Mr. Fitzherbert, who desires me to say, with his regard to you, that he is much obliged to you, but upon the whole, Mr. Elphinston is not the person he would choose. Though Mr. Fitzherbert is no warm party man, yet I believe, the "*Scotchman*" and "*Nonjuror*" would be insuperable objections. Fulham, I think, will be chosen, at least for a time. The hope of your seeing this dear boy sometimes is a comfortable one; thank you for it. His going from home, and at a distance, I am sure you would see the necessity of, could I lay before you the reasons which daily urge me to feel it. Less evils must be submitted to, with the view of avoiding greater. I cannot help, with much pity, regarding a mere fox-hunter as an animal little superior to those he pursues, and dreading every path that seems to lead towards this miserable chase.

"My health continues tolerable, thank God; yours, and every other good, I sincerely wish you. If present resolutions hold, I may have the pleasure of seeing and conversing with you; however, I hope for that of hearing from you. I beg you never to let me lose one of your

[1] Mr. James Elphinston, who kept a school at Kensington.—Wright. [See *ante*, vol. i. p. 186. We gather from this letter that Mr. Elphinston was a *nonjuror*.—Ed.]

reflections upon life. Drop them on the paper just as they arise from your mind; I love them, and profit by them; and I am pleased particularly sometimes to find one of my own, brightened and adorned with your strong and masterly colouring, which gives me back the image of my mind, like the meeting an old acquaintance after absence, but extremely improved. I have no reason, I own, to expect a letter from you soon; but think not that, because I have not before now desired one, I do not deserve one, because I can with truth assure you I have this claim. Nobody can more value your correspondence, or be with greater esteem than I am, dear sir, your friend, and obliged humble servant, "H. BOOTHBY."

LETTER X.

"Tissington, 5th August, 1754.

"DEAR SIR,—I have, as you desired, endeavoured to think about and examine your hypothesis; but this dear little boy, and the change resolved on for him, would not suffer me to speculate in a general way to much purpose. Must you not allow our perception of pain and of pleasure to be in an equal degree? Or does it not often happen, that we are even more sensible to pain than pleasure? If so, those changes which do not increase our present happiness, will not enable us to feel the next vicissitude of gladness with quicker, but only with equal, or with a less degree of perception; and consequently we shall be either no gainers or losers on the whole. And yet, though I am sure I shall experience the truth of this, if I only see you for a few hours, I shall however desire to see you. This is an enigma I will leave to your solution, and proceed to tell you, that, if nothing intervenes to change it, the present resolution is, that we are to set out for Fulham on Wednesday se'nnight, the 14th of August. On account of the dear little ones I shall leave here, I shall be obliged to make a speedy return; and propose staying only a week at a friend's in Putney, to see every thing fixed, as well as I can, for my young man. But I will contrive to see you and a very few more of my friends in town; and you shall hear from me, as to the when and where, from Putney. You, full of kindness, sitting in your study, will, I know, say—'Why does she hurry herself about so?' I answer, to save you the pain of this thought, that travelling always is very serviceable to me in point of health.

"You will never provoke me to contradict you, unless you contradict me, without reasons and exemplification to support your opinion. 'Tis very true—all these things you have enumerated are equally pitiable with a poor fox-hunter. 'Tis not in man to direct, either his own or the way of others aright; nor do I ever look but to the supreme and all-wise Governor of the universe, either for direction or with hope. I know you kindly mean to avert the pain of disap-

pointment by discouraging expectation, but mine is never sanguine with regard to any thing here. Mine is truly a life of faith, not of sight; and thus I never, as Milton says—

> ——'bate one jot
> Of heart or hope; but still bear up, and steer
> Right onward.'

"I like not the conclusion of your last letter; it is an ill compliment to call that *mean*, which the person you speak to most highly esteems and values. Know yourself and me better for the future, and be assured you both are and ought to be much regarded and honoured by, dear sir, your grateful and affectionate friend, "H. BOOTHBY.

"Your dedication[1] to your Great Dictionary I have heard of in these words—A specimen of perfection in the English language."

LETTER XI.

"Putney, 9th August, 1754.

"DEAR SIR,—As I promised, this is to inform you of our being here, but at present I cannot say more. The pleasure of seeing you, with the ways and means of procuring this pleasure, must be deferred for some days. This evening we take dear Billy to school, and till I have seen how he settles there, I am fixed here. Form some little plan for me, to be executed towards the latter end of this week; for really I am not capable of forming any myself at this time—and communicate it by the penny-post in a billet to me at Mrs. D'Aranda's in Putney. I and my little companions here are well, and all has a favourable aspect with regard to the dear boy's situation. I never forget any thing you say; and now have in my mind a very just and useful observation of yours, viz. 'The effect of education is very precarious. But what can be hoped without it? Though the harvest may be blasted, we must yet cultivate the ground,' &c. I am (somewhat abruptly)—but I am, dear sir, your much obliged and affectionate friend, "H. BOOTHBY."

LETTER XII.

"Sunday evening, Holborn-bridge.

"DEAR SIR,—Do you think I would have been almost two days in town without seeing you, if I could either have been at liberty to have made you a visit, or have received one from you? No: you cannot think so unjustly of me. The truth is, I have been in a hurry ever since I came here, and am not well. To-morrow I am obliged to go a little way into the country. On Tuesday, Dr. Lawrence has

[1] [She must mean the *Prospectus* addressed to Lord Chesterfield, which had been published so long before as 1747, of which the original manuscript, with some marginal notes by Lord Chesterfield, is in the possession of Mr. Anderdon.—ED.]

engaged me to spend the evening at his house, where I hope to meet you, and fix with you some hour in which to see you again on Wednesday. Thursday, down towards Derbyshire. Thus is whirled about this little machine; which, however, contains a mind unsubject to rotation. Such you will always find it. "H. BOOTHBY."

LETTER XIII.

"Putney, 23d August, 1754.

"DEAR SIR,—Unless a very great change is made in you, you can never have the least reason to apprehend the loss of my esteem. Caprice may have accompanied the morning, and perhaps noon of my life, but my evening has banished that fickle wanderer; and as now I fix not without deliberation and well-weighed choice, I am not subject to change.

"Your very kind visit was a new obligation, which, if I could express my sense of, it must be less. Common favours it is easy to acknowledge, but a delicate sensibility to real proofs of esteem and friendship are not easily to be made known.

"Mr. Millar's method [1] seems to me to be a very right one, and for the reasons you give; and if he will please to carry the catalogue to Mr. Whiston, by the time I shall be in town, I imagine he will have appraised the books; and then we will proceed to the disposal of them, as you shall judge best. Mr. Fitzherbert I have not seen since I had the pleasure of seeing you, and therefore cannot yet say when I can again have that pleasure; but I hope some time next week to repay your visit. I have an aching head to-day, so great an enemy to my inclination, that it will not let me say more than that I am, with much esteem and true regard, dear sir, your affectionate friend, "H. BOOTHBY.

"Mrs. D'Aranda and the young ladies desire compliments. My regards to Miss Williams."

LETTER XIV.

"Tissington, 12th September, 1754.

"DEAR SIR,—I told you I would call upon you before I left London, if I could. I much desired to have seen you again; it was in my mind all Thursday, but so it happened, that it was not in my power. Mr. Fitzherbert having changed his mind and determined not to go to Tunbridge, suddenly took up another resolution, which was to take a house in town, and engaged me to go with him to see one in Cavendish-square, where I was the greatest part of the morning, and met with what took up the rest of the day, besides so much

[1] [This relates to the sale of some books, which Miss Boothby's brother wanted to dispose of, and about which she employed Johnson to speak to some booksellers.—ED.]

fatigue as would alone have disabled for going out again after I got to Holborn. But, as we are likely to be in town again the next month, and stay there long, I hope I shall have frequent opportunities of seeing you, both where I shall be and at your own house. Thank God we arrived here well on Monday, and found my little dear charge all in perfect health and joy. My brother I shall see next week, and then can fully communicate to him all you was so good as to execute for us in the library affair, and your opinion concerning the disposal of the books. I only saw enough of you in Putney, and in town, to make me wish to see more. It will soon be in your power to gratify this wish. Place is a thing pretty indifferent to me, but London I am least fond of any; however, the conversation of some few in it will soon take off my dislike. I do not mean this as a letter; call it what you will. It is only to tell you why I did not see you again; that I hope a future time will recompense for this loss; that we are safe here; and that every where I am, and shall be, with much esteem, dear sir, your obliged and affectionate friend,

"H. Boothby.

"You can write amidst the tattle of women, because your attention is so strong to sense that you are deaf to sound. I wonder whether you could write amidst the prattle of children; no better than I, I really believe, if they were your own children, as I find these prattlers are mine."

LETTER XV.

"Tissington, 28th September, 1754.

"Dear sir,—Do you wait to hear again from me? or why is it that I am so long without the pleasure of hearing from you? Had my brother kept his appointment, I should not have failed to give you a second letter sooner; now is the first moment I could tell you his determination concerning the books. But first I am to give you his compliments and thanks for your part in the affair. He thinks, as the sum offered by Mr. Whiston is so small a one, and his son is likely to be a scholar, it will be best to suspend any sale of the books for the present; and if on further consideration he finds he must part with them, then to do it in the method you proposed; as that way some may be selected for his son's use, and the rest sold, so as to make more than to be parted with to a bookseller. Upon considering both sides of the question, he rather chooses the hazard on one side, with the certainty of greater profits in case of success, than to accept of Mr. Whiston's sum for all the books at present. But I am preparing for a journey to town; and there I hope I shall have an opportunity of explaining upon this subject in a clearer manner; for, though I know what I would say, I cannot say it clearly amidst the confusion of ideas in my head at this time. I beg to hear from you;

however little I may deserve, I cannot help much desiring a letter from you. If your taste and judgment cannot allow me any thing as a writer, yet let my merit as a sincere friend demand a return. In this demand I will yield to none; for I am sure none can have a truer esteem and friendship towards you than, dear sir, your obliged and affectionate friend, "H. BOOTHBY."

LETTER XVI.

"Tuesday, 29th October, 1754.

"DEAR SIR,—From what Mrs. Lawrence told me I have had daily hopes of the pleasure of seeing you here, which has prevented my desiring that favour. I am much mortified by the disappointment of having been so long in town without one of the greatest satisfactions I promised myself in it—your conversation: and, in short, if you will not come here, I must make you a visit[1]. I should have called upon you before this time if the settling my dear little charge here had not employed me so much at home; now that business is almost completed. Pray say when and where I may have the pleasure of seeing you. Perhaps you may not imagine how much I am affected by the not receiving any reply to two letters I wrote before we left Derbyshire, and the being a fortnight in town without seeing a person whom I highly esteem, and to whom I am an obliged and affectionate friend, "H. BOOTHBY."

LETTER XVII.

"Friday night, 29th November, 1754.

"DEAR SIR,—How particularly unlucky I was to be out to-day when you came! For above these fourteen days have I never been a moment from home, but closely attending my poor dear Miss Fitzherbert, who has been very ill, and unwillingly left her to-day to pay a debt of civility long due. I imagined if you came to-day, it would be about the time of my return home. But that we may be the better acquainted with each other's hours, and I secure against a second mortifying disappointment, I send to tell you that not being an evening rapper at people's doors, whenever I do go out it is in a morning—a town-morning—between noon and three o'clock; and that for the next four mornings I must be out. Now can't you as conveniently let me have the pleasure of seeing you at five some evening? Name any one; and you shall have your tea as I can make it, and a gratification infinitely superior I know in your estimation to

[1] [It must be observed in this, the preceding, and the following letters, how few the interviews between Dr. Johnson and Miss Boothby seem to have been even when they resided in the same place.—ED.]

any other, that of seeing your presence gives great pleasure to a friend; for such I most sincerely am to you, "H. BOOTHBY."

LETTER XVIII[1].

"DEAR SIR,—I have company, from whom I run just to say I have often rejoiced to see your hand, but never so much as now. Come and see me as soon as you can; and I shall forgive an absence which has indeed given me no small disturbance. I am, dear sir, your affectionate friend, "H. BOOTHBY."

LETTER XIX.

"DEAR SIR,—Perhaps you are the only author in England who could make a play a very acceptable present to me. But you have; and I assure you I shall leave your Irene behind me[2] when I go hence in my little repository of valuable things. Miss Fitzherbert is much delighted, and desires her best thanks. The author's company would have more enhanced the value of the present; but that we will hope for soon. I am much obliged to you for the good account of the Lawrences, and for many things which increase my regard, and confirm me in being, dear sir, your affectionate friend,

"H. BOOTHBY."

LETTER XX.

"15th May, 1755.

"MY GOOD FRIEND,—I hoped to have seen you here last night, as the doctor told me he had informed you I was in town again. It is hard to be suspected of coldness and indifference at the very time when one is, and with reason, most strongly sensible of the contrary. From your own kind conduct to me in particular lately, you who are accustomed to make just inferences and conclusions, might have easily made the true ones, and have discovered there was too much to be expressed[3]. To a less penetrating person this might occasion a surprise of neglect; but I could not have imagined you would or could have been so deceived. My friendship is a poor acquisition;

[1] [This undated note seems to imply that there had been an interruption of their intercourse, occasioned either by some misunderstanding or by illness; if by the latter, the date was probably in the winter of 1755.—ED.]

[2] [Miss Boothby probably left town before Christmas, 1755, and did not return till about May, 1756.—ED.]

[3] [These expressions, it must be owned, seem to partake of the *tender;* but the age and circumstances of the parties, and the context of other letters, induce the editor to attribute these and certain similar expressions which he will soon observe in Dr. Johnson's answers, to the enthusiastic style in which Miss Boothby and her friends indulged. See particularly the next letters of the lady, in which it appears that she was endeavouring to proselyte Johnson to her peculiar views of some religious subjects.—ED.]

but you see it is so far valuable that it is firm and constant. Then you will say it is not a poor acquisition. Well, be it what it will, be assured you have as far as it can ever extend either to please or serve you. But do not suspect me. I have an opportunity just now to send this—therefore no more till I see you; except that I am, indeed with much esteem, gratitude, and affection, dear sir, your friend,

"H. BOOTHBY.

"I hope I am better, and Miss F. in a good way. She has the measles."

LETTER XXI.

"Tissington, 15th June, 1755.

"DEAR SIR,—That we arrived safe here, and had every thing to make our journey easy and pleasant, is most of what I have time to say, except that amidst the smiles of the country, a country I love, my native one, and the smiles of my children, whom I love much more, I am sensible you are a hundred and forty miles distant. This is not like forgetting you. At present I am the worse for the fatigue of travelling; which, contrary to custom, was a great one to me: but I hope this pure, sweet air, will have a great influence upon my health when I have recovered my fatigue. Your little friend is I think the better for her four days' exercise. You were the subject of our conversation many times on the road, and will often be so. I hope I shall soon find you think of us. I can never forget the hours you generously bestowed on one who has no claim or merit, but that of being, dear sir, with much esteem, your grateful and affectionate friend,

"H. BOOTHBY.

"Miss Fitzherbert's love to you; no small treasure, I assure you."

LETTER XXII.

"Tissington, 4th July, 1755.

"Two letters from Mr. Johnson! Why did I not reply to the first kind greeting before he answered my letter? I don't love to be outdone in kindness; and I was both angry and pleased when I saw your second letter, my good friend. But the truth is I have been lazy. It had been long since I had known what quiet was; and I found in myself, both inwardly and outwardly, a strong inclination to enjoy it. I read your letters over and over; but till now I could not sit down to write to you. It is true I am abstracted from common life, as you say. What is common life but a repetition of the same things over and over? And is it made up of such things as a thinking, reflecting being can bear the repetition of over and over long without weariness? I have found not; and therefore my view is turned to the things of that life which must be begun here, is ever

new and increasing, and will be continued eternally hereafter. Yet, mistake me not, I am so far from excluding social duties from this life that I am sure they are a part of it, and can only be duly and truly exerted in it. Common life I call not social life; but in general that dissipation and wandering which leads from the duties of it. While I was in town I did not feel myself as a part of that multitude around me. The objects I saw at dinners, &c. except yourself, when they had any of my attention, drew it only to pity their want of attention to what chiefly concerned their happiness; and oftener they were as passing straws on the surface of a Dovedale stream[1], and went as lightly and as quick over the surface of my mind. My importance here I wish was greater, if it might please God to grant me another wish, that of making one soul better and happier. I think reputation and dignity have no value, but as far as they may be made means of influencing and leading into virtue and piety. Mankind of all degrees are naturally the same: manners differ from different causes, but not men. A miner in Derbyshire, under the appearance of simplicity and honesty, has perhaps more art than the most accomplished statesman. We are all alike bad, my dear friend, depend upon it, till a change is wrought upon us, not by our own reasoning, but by the same Divine Power who first created and pronounced all he had made very good. From this happy state we all plainly fell, and to it can we only be restored by the second Adam, who wrought out a full and complete redemption and restoration for us. Is this enthusiasm? Indeed it is truth: and I trust you will some time be sure it is so; and then, and not till then, will you be happy, as I ardently wish you. I am much better. My cough is now nothing, and my voice almost clear. I am weak yet, too weak to attempt to see Dovedale. But keep your resolution, and come and see us; and I hope I shall be able to walk there with you. I give you leave to fear the loss of me, but doubt not in the least of my affection and friendship; this I cannot forgive. Miss Fitzherbert says she does not forget her promise. She is studying your *Ramblers* to form her style, and hopes soon to give you a specimen of good writing. She is very well, and flying about the fields every fair day, as the rest are.

"Let me hear from you as soon as you can. I love your letters, and always rejoice to find myself in your thoughts. You are very frequently in mine; and seldom without a petition to heaven for you. Poor is that love which is bounded by the narrow space of this temporal scene: mine extends to an eternity; and I cannot desire any thing less for you, for whom I have the sincerest regard, than end-

[1] [Tissington is within a walk of Dovedale, one side of which belongs to the Fitzherberts.—Ed.]

less happiness; as a proof that I am truly, dear sir, your affectionate friend, "H. Boothby.

"The great Dictionary is placed in full view, on a desk in my own room. I am sorry you have met with some disappointments in the next edition[1]. Best wishes to Miss Williams.

"Do not say you have heard from me at the good doctor's[2]. I should write to him, but have laid out all my present stock of time on you. O! chaises and such things are only transient disquiets. I have, on a fine still day, observed the water as smooth as glass, suddenly curled on the surface by a little gust of air, and presently still and smooth again. No more than this are my chaise troubles. Like Hamlet's Ghost, *'Tis here—'tis gone.*"

LETTER XXIII.

"Tissington, 23d July, 1755.

"Dear sir,—To answer your questions—I can say that I love your letters, because it is very true that I do love them; and I do not know any one reason why I may not declare this truth; so much do I think it would be for my reputation, that I should choose to declare it, not only to you, but to all who know you. Ask yourself why I value your affection; for you cannot be so much a stranger to yourself as not to know many reasons why I ought highly to value it; and I hope you are not so much a stranger to me as not to know I would always do as I ought, though, perhaps, in this case the doing so has not the merit of volition—for in truth I cannot help it. So much in reply to the two first sentences in your last letter. It is no unpleasing circumstance to me that the same messenger who has taken a letter to the post-house at Ashbourn from me to you, has twice brought back one from you to me. Possibly, while I am now replying to your last, you may be giving me a reply to mine again. Both ways I shall be pleased, whether I happen to be beforehand with you, or you again with me.

"I am desirous that in the *great and one thing necessary* you should think as I do; and I am persuaded you some time will. I will not enter into a controversy with you. I am sure I never can this way convince you in any point wherein we may differ; nor can any mortal convince me, by human arguments, that there is not a divine evidence for divine truths[3]. Such the apostle plainly defines faith to be, when he tells us it is 'the substance of things hoped *for*, the evi-

[1] [What these were do not appear. See *ante*, vol. i. p. 288. *n.*—Ed.]

[2] [Dr. Lawrence.—Ed.]

[3] [It must not be inferred from this that Dr. Johnson had in his letter maintained a contrary doctrine. He probably combated some of Miss Boothby's peculiar tenets which she defends, as is common in such controversies, by assertions which her antagonist would not have thought of denying.—Ed.]

dence of things not seen.' Human testimony can go no farther than things seen and visible to the senses. Divine and spiritual things are far above; and what says St. Paul? 'For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? Even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the spirit of God.' Do read the whole chapter; and, if you please, Mr. Romaine's Sermon, or Discourse, lately published, 'On the benefit which the Holy Spirit of God is of to man in his journey through life.' I utterly disclaim all faith that does not work by love, love that—

'Takes every creature in of every kind;'

and believe from my soul that in every sect and denomination of Christians there are numbers, great numbers, who will sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and the promise you quote be gloriously fulfilled. I believe and rejoice in this assurance of happiness for ten thousand times ten thousand, thousand, &c. of every language and nation and people. I am convinced that many true Christians differ; and if such do differ, it can be only in words, with regard to which great caution should be used.

"I continue as well in health as I told you I was in my last. Mr. Fitzherbert has put off his coming here till August. My dear Miss is very well. She bids me send you her love, and tell you she must consider some time about writing to you before she can execute properly.

"Do not treat me with so much deference. I have no claim to it; and, from a friend, it looks too like ceremony—a thing I am at this time more particularly embarrassed with. Perhaps you never knew a person less apt to take offence than myself; and if it was otherwise in general, I am sure you would not have cause to apprehend the giving it, but would always be a particular exception to my taking it.

"See how far the pleasure of conversing with you has overcome my present dislike to writing; and let it be a farther proof to you of my being, dear sir, your affectionate friend, and obliged humble servant,

"H. BOOTHBY[1].

"How does Miss Williams and her father? My regards to her."

LETTER XXIV.

"Tissington, 29th July, 1755.

"DEAR SIR,—As it happened your rebuke for my silence was so timed as to give me pleasure. Your complaints would have been very painful to me had I not been pretty certain that before I read them you would receive a letter which would take away all cause for them. I could not have borne them under the least conscious-

[1] At the end of this letter Dr. Johnson wrote, *answered*.—WRIGHT.

ness of having merited them. But, quite free from this, such marks of your friendship were very pleasing. You need not make use of any arguments to persuade me of the necessity of frequent writing; I am very willing to acknowledge it in a correspondence with you; though I never so little liked to write, in general, since I could write, as for some time past. Both my mind and body are much indisposed to this employment. The last is not so easy in the posture which habit has fixed when I write, and consequently the mind affected too. To you I always wish to appear in the best light; but you will excuse infirmities; and to purchase your letters I shall think my time happily bestowed. If but one line can give you pleasure or suspend pain, I shall rejoice. How kind was your last little letter! I longed to return my immediate thanks: but Mr. Fitzherbert's mother, an old lady, bigoted to forms, prevented me; and has prevented me till now. She came here, is here, and stays some time. I continue much better in my health, thank God! alert and cheerful; and have stood storms and tempests, rain and cold, unhurt. I observe the good doctor's rules, and have found them efficacious. Mr. Fitzherbert had appointed his time for being here as next week, but has changed it to near three weeks hence. Tell me some literary news—I mean of your own; for I am very indifferent to the productions of others, but interested warmly in all yours, both in heart and mind.

"I hope our difference is only in words, or that in time our sentiments will be so much the same as to make our expressions clear and plain. As you say, every moment brings the time nearer in which we must think alike. O may this time (or rather end of time to us) which will fully disclose truth, also with it disclose eternal happiness to us! You see I cannot help praying for you, nor shall I ever, as I am truly, dear sir, your affectionate friend, "H. Boothby.

"My little flock all well; Miss much at your service, and has a high regard for you. If you mention me at the doctor's, mention me as one who is always glad of paying regard there, and hearing well of them."

LETTER XXV.

"30th July, 1755.

"Dear sir,—Why, my good friend, you are so bountiful and so kind that I must thank you, and say I am truly grateful, though I have not time for more, as I have been obliged to write several letters to-day, and cannot easily write much. Your account of Mr. Williams's departure was very sweet to me[1]. He is happy without doubt, and, instead of condoling with, I most heartily rejoice with

[1] [When the term "*sweet*" is applied on such an occasion, it is not surprising that we meet strange expressions scattered through the correspondence.—Ed.]

Miss Williams from this assurance, which I trust she has as strongly as I, and then she must be every moment thankful.

"I am not so well as I have been. The damp weather has affected me. But my dear children are all well; and some sunshine will revive me again. This is only to let you see I think of you, and, as I ought, receive every instance of your regard when I assure you it increases mine, and makes me more and more, dear sir, your grateful and affectionate friend, "H. BOOTHBY.

"I will tell you some time what I think of Anacreon[1]."

LETTER XXVI.

"13th August, 1755.

"DEAR SIR,—You was at Oxford then? And I was vain enough to conclude you was not in town, or I should have heard from you sooner, and you have not lessened my vanity by thinking of and writing to me, in a place where so many objects suited to your taste would be courting your attention—so many of the learned seeking your conversation. This is a new obligation, of which I am very sensible. Yet I had rather seen a letter dated from Lichfield, because then I should have hoped soon to see Mr. Johnson himself, and for an opportunity of conversing with him.

"I am at present preparing to receive Mr. Fitzherbert, Mr. and Mrs. Alleyne, Mr. Gernier, &c. If you have been in town this week, probably you have seen Mr. Fitzherbert. I hope he would not neglect to inquire after the most valuable acquaintance he has there. Our scene here will be much changed. But all is, and ought to be, variable in this life; and I expect the change with much inward tranquillity. The interval of rest and quiet I have had has greatly contributed to the amendment of my health. I walked a mile yesterday without great fatigue; and hope I shall be able to support the labours to come. I am not careful, however, for the morrow. That is in the hands of the almighty and all-merciful God. There I trust; and pray—'Give me *this* day my daily bread.'

"Miss is still *tuning*—no wonder that you have inspired *her* with awe. She is disturbed she does not write; yet cannot satisfy herself

[1] [Had he sent to Miss Boothby the translation of Anacreon's Dove, which he gave to Mrs. Thrale in 1777? When dictating it to that lady he said, "I never was much struck with any thing in the Greek language till I read *that*, so I never read any thing in the same language since, that pleased me as much. I hope my translation," continued he, "is not worse than that of Frank Fawkes." Seeing her disposed to laugh, "Nay, nay," said he, "Frank Fawkes has done them very finely." When she had finished writing, "But you must remember to add," said Dr. Johnson, "that though these verses were planned, and even begun, when I was sixteen years old, I never could find time to make an end of them before I was sixty-eight."—ED.]

with any mental composition. She has yet been working for you. I leave her to herself, and hope she will produce something.

"Remember that the more people I see the more I shall rejoice in a letter from you. Turtle-feasts and venison-feasts I delight not in. Treat me sometimes, as often as you can, with what will be really a feast; and in the best manner I am able I will thank you, and be ever, as now, dear sir, your grateful and affectionate friend,

"H. Boothby."

LETTER XXVII.

"Tissington, 20th August, 1755.

"Dear sir,—Every where I find myself in your thoughts—at Oxford—in town. How shall I reward this kind attention to a friend, this tender solicitude for her health and welfare? Your partiality will I know make you reply, 'by neglecting no means to procure and preserve them.' This is what I am sensible I owe to the most inconsiderable creature whom it pleases a good Providence to benefit in the last degree by me; and much more to a friend. Pain and sickness do most certainly produce the consequences you observe; and often do I reflect with the greatest wonder and gratitude on all those various occasions in which it has pleased God to visit me with these, that he should never leave me without that medicine of life—a friend.

"I am glad you saw Mr. Fitzherbert, and that he repeated his invitation to Tissington. He and his company arrived here on Thursday last, all at a loss what to do with themselves in *still life*. They set out yesterday to Derby race, and return on Friday, with some forty more people, to eat a turtle; weight, a hundred and thirty. This feast I, who, you know, love eating, am preparing for them. It will be a day of fatigue. But then how sweet and comfortable it will be, to lie down and rest at night! The sleep of a labouring man is sweet, whether he eateth little or much. My business is to prepare a feast, not to eat. During the time of our having been here alone, I have found great good from rest and quiet, and the strength gained in this interval of repose enables me to support the hurry of company, and the necessary cares for their reception and entertainment, much better than I could do for a long time before I left London. But I am not so well as I was a fortnight since. The pain in my side is increased, as I find it will be on all occasions where I am obliged to prolong exercise to the least degree of fatigue, and in my present situation there is no avoiding these sometimes. But I have respite seasonably, thank God, as now. And next week Mr. Fitzherbert and his guests go to dance at Buxton, and see the Peak. You will perhaps think a tour round the Peak would be no bad thing for me; and I should think so too; but as this will be ordered, or

disordered, by the uncertainty and irregularity of the directors, it will be a rash attempt for me; and, besides, they have only vehicles sufficient for themselves; so that I shall have another resting time, before they return again to stay a few days; and then they all go to Lichfield race, from whence Mr. Fitzherbert and Gernier only return back. Now, I have not only told you the state of my health, but of affairs here, that you may know both how I do, and what I do.

"And, while I am writing all this, I really feel ashamed; conscious how little I merit to be thought of consequence enough for any body to desire such information concerning me, particularly you, who I am persuaded might select a friend among the most worthy. Do not call this feigned humility, or, in other words, the worst sort of pride. 'Tis truth, I assure you.

"Will you come into Derbyshire? But why do I ask? You say you will. In the mean time, I will endeavour, with God's blessing, to lay in a stock of health, that I may have the pleasure of walking with you in Dovedale, and many other pleasures I hope for.

"You desire longer letters; here you have one—but such a one as I am afraid will not make you repeat that desire. However, it will be a proof of my willingness to gratify your request whenever it is in my power, and that I never say little to Mr. Johnson by choice, but when I can hear him talk.

"The least degree of your quiet is a treasure which I shall take the utmost care of—but yet, from very certain experience, and the truest regard to your peace, I must advise to take it out of all human hands. Young's experience strongly speaks with mine—

> 'Lean not on earth; 't will pierce thee to the heart;
> A broken reed, at best; but oft a spear;
> On its sharp point Peace bleeds, and Hope expires.'

Yet such has been the amazing mercy of God to me, that now I can say—'It is good for me that I have been afflicted.' Looking over some old papers lately, I found two lines I had scratched out, which were prophetic of what has since happened to me—

> 'Variety of pain *will* make me know,
> That greatest bliss is drawn from greatest woe.'

But this, perhaps, you say, is far from being a dissuasive. Why, as to the event here, 'tis indeed the contrary. But, in general, the disappointment and pain is certain, the event not so. There is no peace but that one which the Prince of Peace, king of Salem, left to his disciples—'Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you; not as the world giveth, give I unto you.' No; for in another place, our Saviour says, 'In the world ye shall have tribulation'—'Seek, and you will surely find.' You do me the honour to call me your monitress; and you see I endeavour to execute the duty of one.

Peace and happiness here and for ever do I most ardently wish you; as I am truly, dear sir, your greatly obliged and affectionate friend,

"H. BOOTHBY.

"Miss's love.

"N.B.—I intended to have concluded this, where I talked of a longer letter on the other side, but went on imperceptibly as it were. Remember you are a whole sheet in my debt after you receive this."

LETTER XXVIII.

"8th September, 1755.

"DEAR SIR,—It is as impossible for me to forbear writing, as it is to say a tenth part of what I would say. Two letters I have from you demand a vast deal; yet not more than I am willing to give, was I able; but Mr. Fitzherbert has been at home above a week, and company, &c. have prevented my doing any thing but attend to domestic employments. I do not allow you to be a judge with regard to your conferring obligations. I am to judge and estimate in this case. But, now you know my thoughts, if the repetition displeases, I shall avoid it.

"Your letters are indeed very different from the common dialect of daily correspondence, and as different from the style of a school dogmatist. Much sense in few and well-chosen words. Daily correspondence does not commonly afford, nor a school dogmatist, delicate praise. So much for your letters. As to what you say of mine, dear sir, if they please you, I am perfectly satisfied. And, high as I rate your judgment, it gives me more pleasure to think I owe much of your applause to the partiality of a kind friend, than I should receive from unbiassed criticism; were it publicly to pronounce me superior to all the Arindas, Sevignés, &c. in epistolary excellence.

"I have been fourteen miles to-day, was out by eight in the morning (some hours before your day begins), despatched several important things, am tired, but could not suffer another post to go without an assurance that I am, dear sir, your affectionate friend, and obliged one too,

"H. BOOTHBY."

LETTER XXIX.

"Tissington, 20th Sept., 1755.

"DEAR SIR,—Were I at liberty, it would not be in my power to enhance the value of my letters by their scarcity. You should have them, till you cried out 'Hold your hand.' But you cannot imagine the half of what I have to do; and I assure you I have on your account put off writing to others from time to time, till now I am ashamed. Be silent at Dr. Lawrence's as to me, for I have been long in debt there: I intended to have paid to-day, but you won't let me. This way I consider—I must go to Derby on Monday, to stay some

days—no writing then—and, therefore, I must write to Mr. Johnson now, and defer the rest—why I *must* write to Mr. Johnson, rather than to others, he may find out.'

"You do not pity me, when I am whirled round by a succession of company; yet you are anxious for my health. Now this is, though perhaps unknown to you, really a contradiction. For one day's crowd, with the preceding necessary preparations to receive them, the honours, as it is called, of a large table, with the noise, &c. attending, pulls down my feeble frame more than any thing you can imagine. To that, air, gentle exercise, and then quiet and rest, are most friendly. You have often declared you cannot be alone; and I, as often, that I could not *be* long, unless I was some hours in every day alone. I have found myself mistaken; for yet I am in being, though for some time past I have seldom had one half hour in a day to myself; and I have learned this profitable lesson, that resignation is better than indulgence; and time is too precious a thing for me to have at my own disposal. Providence has given it to others, and, if it may profit them, I shall rejoice. It is all I desire.

"I can only be sorry that the text in the Corinthians[1] does not prove to you what I would have it, and add to my prayers for you that it may prove it.

"Miss Fitzherbert is very well, and all my dear flock. She sends her love to you.

"You will prolong[2] your visit to this part of the world, till some of us are so tired of it that we shall be moving towards you. Consider, it is almost October. When do you publish? Any news relating to you will be acceptable: if it is good, I shall rejoice; if not, hope to lessen any pain it may give you by the sharing it, as, dear sir, your truly affectionate friend, "H. BOOTHBY."

LETTER XXX.

"Tissington, 11th October, 1755.

"DEAR SIR,—I have been so great a rambler lately, that I have not had time to write. A week at Derby; another between Stafford and some other relations. The hurrying about proved too much for my strength, and disordered me a good deal; but now, thank God, I am better again. Your letter I met here, as I always do every one you write, with much pleasure. I expected this pleasure; and as I should have met disappointment if I had not had a letter, so the pleasure of one was increased. Few things can disappoint me; I look for no satisfaction from them; but you may greatly, as you have given me a confidence in your highly valued friendship. Complaints

[1] [*Ante*, p. 546.—ED.]
[2] [By *prolong* she must mean *delay*.—ED.]

for want of time will be one of those which must be made by all, whose hope is not full of immortality; and to this, the previous review of life, and reflections you have made, are necessary. I am persuaded you had not time to say more, or you could not have concluded your last as you did. A moment's reflection would have prevented a needless wish.

"Have you read Mr. Law? not cursorily, but with attention? I wish you would consider him. 'His appeal to all that doubt, &c.' I think the most clear of all his later writings; and, in recommending it to you, I shall say no more or less than what you will see he says in his advertisement to the reader.

"In less than a month we are to be in Cavendish-square. Mr. Fitzherbert has fixed Friday se'nnight for going to town himself, and we are to follow soon after that time. Need I say, I shall be glad to see you? No—you know I shall; and, unless duty[1] calls to Lichfield, I wish rather to have that visit deferred, till it may give me an opportunity of seeing you here on our return in the summer. Consider of this, and contrive so, if possible, as that both in summer and winter I may have the pleasure of your conversation; which will greatly cheer the gloom of one season, and add to the smiles of the other. Such influence has such a friend on, dear sir, your obliged and affectionate humble servant, "H. Boothby.

"My dear Miss Fitzherbert is well, very well, and has never given me one alarm since we came here. She sends you her love very sincerely."

"DR. JOHNSON TO MISS BOOTHBY.

"Saturday[2], [27th Dec. 1755.]

"Dearest dear,—I am extremely obliged to you for the kindness of your inquiry. After I had written to you, Dr. Lawrence came, and would have given some oil and sugar, but I took rhenish and water, and recovered my voice. I yet cough much, and sleep ill. I have been visited by another doctor to-day; but I laughed at his balsam of Peru. I fasted on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday, and felt neither hunger nor faintness. I have dined yesterday and to-day, and found little refreshment. I am not much amiss; but can no more sleep than if my dearest lady were angry at, madam, your, &c.

[1] [His mother was still alive and resident in Lichfield, but he never again visited that town during her life. See *ante*, vol. i. p. 274. *n.* p. 360.—Ed.]

[2] [Probably Saturday, 27th December, 1755. These undated notes it is not easy to arrange; but the order the editor has assigned to them seems probable and is consistent with the contents. It seems that while Johnson was labouring under some kind of feverish cold, Miss Boothby herself fell ill of a disease, of which she died in a fortnight.—Ed.]

LETTER XXXI.

"Sunday night, (*December*, 1755[1].)

"MY DEAR SIR,—I am in trouble about you; and the more, as I am not able to see how you do myself—pray send me word. You have my sincere prayers; and the first moment I can, you shall see, dear sir, your affectionate friend, "H. BOOTHBY.

"I beg you would be governed by the good doctor while you are sick; when you are well, do as you please."

"DR. JOHNSON TO MISS BOOTHBY.

"30th December, 1755.

"DEAR MADAM,—It is again midnight, and I am again alone. With what meditation shall I amuse this waste hour of darkness and vacuity? If I turn my thoughts upon myself, what do I perceive but a poor helpless being, reduced by a blast of wind to weakness and misery? How my present distemper was brought upon me I can give no account, but impute it to some sudden succession of cold to heat; such as in the common road of life cannot be avoided, and against which no precaution can be taken.

"Of the fallaciousness of hope and the uncertainty of schemes, every day gives some new proof; but it is seldom heeded, till something rather felt than seen awakens attention. This illness, in which I have suffered something, and feared much more, has depressed my confidence and elation; and made me consider all that I had promised myself, as less certain to be attained or enjoyed. I have endeavoured to form resolutions of a better life; but I form them weakly, under the consciousness of an external motive. Not that I conceive a time of sickness, a time improper for recollection and good purposes, which I believe diseases and calamities often sent to produce, but because no man can know how little his performance will answer to his promises; and designs are nothing in human eyes till they are realised by execution.

"Continue, my dearest, your prayers for me, that no good resolution may be vain. You think, I believe, better of me than I deserve. I hope to be in time what I wish to be; and what I have hitherto satisfied myself too readily with only wishing.

"Your billet brought me, what I much wished to have, a proof that I am still remembered by you at the hour in which I most desire it.

"The Doctor[2] is anxious about you. He thinks you too negligent

[1] In Dr. Johnson's handwriting.—WRIGHT. [Probably Sunday, 28th Dec. 1755. Miss Boothby seems to have come to town in the preceding month.—ED.]

[2] [Doctor Lawrence.—ED.]

of yourself; if you will promise to be cautious, I will exchange promises, as we have already exchanged injunctions. However, do not write to me more than you can easily bear; do not interrupt your ease to write at all.

"Mr. Fitzherbert sent to-day to offer me some wine; the people about me say I ought to accept it. I shall therefore be obliged to him if he will send me a bottle.

"There has gone about a report that I died to-day, which I mention, lest you should hear it and be alarmed. You see that I think my death may alarm you; which, for me, is to think very highly of earthly friendship. I believe it arose from the death of one of my neighbours. You know Des Cartes' argument, 'I think; therefore I am.' It is as good a consequence, 'I write; therefore I am alive.' I might give another, 'I am alive; therefore I love Miss Boothby;' but that I hope our friendship may be of far longer duration than life. I am, dearest madam, with sincere affection, yours,

"SAM. JOHNSON."

"MISS BOOTHBY TO DR. JOHNSON.

"[*December*, 1755[1].]

"MY DEAR SIR,—Would I was able to reply fully to both your kind letters! but at present I am not. I trust we shall both be better soon, with a blessing upon our good doctor's means. I have been, as he can tell you, all obedience. As an answer to one part of your letter, I have sent you a little book[2]. God bless you. I must defer the rest, till I am more able. Dear sir, your affectionate friend,

"H. BOOTHBY.

"Give Cooper some tickets.

"I am glad you sent for the hock. Mr. Fitzherbert has named it more than once.

"Thank you for saving me from what indeed might have greatly hurt me, had I heard or seen in a paper such a ———."

"DR. JOHNSON TO MISS BOOTHBY.

"Wednesday, December 31, 1755.

"MY SWEET ANGEL,—I have read your book, I am afraid you will think without any great improvement; whether you can read my notes, I know not. You ought not to be offended; I am perhaps as sincere as the writer. In all things that terminate here I shall be much guided by your influence, and should take or leave by your

[1] In Dr. Johnson's handwriting.—WRIGHT.

[2] [Probably not one of Law's works, mentioned in the letter of the 11th October., Dr. Johnson told Mr. Boswell (*ante*, vol. i. p. 39) that Law's *Serious Call* was the first book that ever awoke him to a sense of real religion. The work, whatever it was, lent him by Miss Boothby, he does not seem to have approved.—ED.]

direction; but I cannot receive my religion from any human hand. I desire however to be instructed, and am far from thinking myself perfect.

"I beg you to return the book when you have looked into it. should not have written what was in the margin, had I not had it from you, or had I not intended to show it you.

"It affords me a new conviction, that in these books there is little new, except new forms of expression; which may be sometimes taken, even by the writer, for new doctrines.

"I sincerely hope that God, whom you so much desire to serve aright, will bless you, and restore you to health, if he sees it best. Surely no human understanding can pray for any thing temporal otherwise than conditionally. Dear angel, do not forget me. My heart is full of tenderness.

"It has pleased God to permit me to be much better; which I believe will please you.

"Give me leave, who have thought much on medicine, to propose to you an easy, and I think a very probable remedy for indigestion and lubricity of the bowels. Dr. Lawrence has told me your case. Take an ounce of dried orange peel finely powdered, divide it into scruples, and take one scruple at a time in any manner; the best way is perhaps to drink it in a glass of hot red port, or to eat it first, and drink the wine after it. If you mix cinnamon or nutmeg with the powder, it were not worse; but it will be more bulky, and so more troublesome. This is a medicine not disgusting, not costly, easily tried, and if not found useful, easily left off[1].

"I would not have you offer it to the doctor as mine. Physicians do not love intruders; yet do not take it without his leave. But do not be easily put off, for it is in my opinion very likely to help you, and not likely to do you harm: do not take too much in haste; a scruple once in three hours, or about five scruples a day, will be sufficient to begin; or less, if you find any aversion. I think using sugar with it might be bad; if syrup, use old syrup of quinces; but even that I do not like. I should think better of conserve of sloes. Has the doctor mentioned the bark? In powder you could hardly take it; perhaps you might take the infusion.

"Do not think me troublesome, I am full of care. I love you and honour you, and am very unwilling to lose you. *A Dieu je vous recommande.* I am, madam, your, &c.

"My compliments to my dear Miss."

[1] [See *ante*, vol. iii. p. 205.—Ed.]

"TO THE SAME.

(*From Mrs. Piozzi's Collection, vol. ii. p.* 391.)

"1st January, 1755[1].

"DEAREST MADAM,—Though I am afraid your illness leaves you little leisure for the reception of airy civilities, yet I cannot forbear to pay you my congratulations on the new year; and to declare my wishes, that your years to come may be many and happy. In this wish indeed I include myself, who have none but you on whom my heart reposes; yet surely I wish your good, even though your situation were such as should permit you to communicate no gratifications to, dearest madam, your, &c."

"TO THE SAME.

(*From Mrs. Piozzi's Collection, vol. ii. p.* 392.)

"[January 3d, 1756.]

"DEAREST MADAM,—Nobody but you can recompense me for the distress which I suffered on Monday night. Having engaged Dr. Lawrence to let me know, at whatever hour, the state in which he left you; I concluded, when he stayed so long, that he stayed to see my dearest expire. I was composing myself as I could to hear what yet I hoped not to hear, when his servant brought me word that you were better. Do you continue to grow better? Let my dear little Miss inform me on a card. I would not have you write, lest it should hurt you, and consequently hurt likewise, dearest madam, yours, &c."

"TO THE SAME.

"Thursday, 8th January, 1756.

"HONOURED MADAM,—I beg of you to endeavour to live. I have returned your Law; which, however, I earnestly entreat you to give me. I am in great trouble; if you can write three words to me, be pleased to do it. I am afraid to say much, and cannot say nothing when my dearest is in danger.

"The all-merciful God have mercy on you! I am, madam, your, &c."

"*Miss Boothby died Friday, January* 16, 1756; *upon whose death Dr. Johnson composed the following prayer.* 'Prayers and Meditations,' &c. p. 25.

"*Hill Boothby's death, January,* 1756.—O Lord God, Almighty disposer of all things, in whose hands are life and death, who givest com-

[1] [Johnson throughout his life was liable to the inadvertence of using the date of the old year in the first days of the new; and has evidently, the editor thinks, done so in this case; as it does not seem that Miss Boothby was ill in January, 1755.—ED.]

forts and takest them away, I return thee thanks for the good example of Hill Boothby, whom thou hast now taken away; and implore thy grace that I may improve the opportunity of instruction which thou hast afforded me, by the knowledge of her life, and by the sense of her death; that I may consider the uncertainty of my present state, and apply myself earnestly to the duties which thou hast set before me, that, living in thy fear, I may die in thy favour, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

"I commend, &c. W. and H. B[1]."

"*Transcribed June* 26, 1768[2]."

[On a close examination of the foregoing correspondence, it will be seen that the personal communications between Dr. Johnson and Miss Boothby were very limited, and that even during her few and short visits to London their intercourse was hardly as frequent as politeness would have required from common acquaintances.

The Editor admits that several of Miss Boothby's letters contain expressions which, if we did not consider the ages of the parties and all the other circumstances of the case, would sound like something more tender than mere platonism; but the slight intercourse between them during the lady's subsequent visits to town seems to refute that inference.

The general phraseology of Johnson's notes, and the terms "*my dearest*" and "*my angel*," seem strange; but it must be recollected that *dearest dear*, and similar superlatives of tenderness, were usual with him in addressing Miss Reynolds and other ladies for whom he confessedly felt nothing but *friendship*; and they were addressed to Miss Boothby when she was dying, and when the hearts of both were softened by sickness and affliction, and warmed by spiritual communication.

As to the supposed rivalry between him and Lord Lyttelton for Miss Boothby's favour (see *ante*, vol. i. p. 51, and *post*, vol. iv. p. 427), it must be either a total mistake or an absurd exaggeration. Lord Lyttelton was, during the whole of the acquaintance of Dr. Johnson and Miss Boothby, a married man, fondly attached to his wife, and remarkable for the punctilious propriety of his moral conduct; and the *preference* shown by Miss Boothby, and which is said to have rankled in Johnson's heart, could have been nothing more than some incident in a *morning visit*, when Lord Lyttelton and Johnson may have met in Cavendish-square, (for it seems certain that they never met in the country). We have seen in the cases of Lord Chester-

[1] [These initials mean, no doubt, *Mr. Williams*, who died a few months before, and *Hill Boothby*.—Ed.]

[2] [It is not easy to say why Dr. Johnson marked several of his prayers, as *transcribed*. Such a fact *appears* quite immaterial, but no doubt had some particular object.—Ed.]

field (vol. i. p. 244 and *note*) and of Miss Cotterell (vol. i. p. 227) how touchy Johnson was on such occasions, and how ready he was to take offence at any thing that looked like slight. Some preference or superior respect shown by Miss Boothby to Lord Lyttelton's rank and public station (he was chancellor of the exchequer in 1755) no doubt offended the sensitive pride of Johnson, and occasioned the dislike which he confessed to Mrs. Thrale he felt for Lord Lyttelton; but an amorous rivalry between them is not only absurd but impossible.—Ed.]

END OF VOL. IV.

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